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THE WORKS OF

ALFRED

LORD TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

IN TEN VOLUMES

VOLUME TEN

New York
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND LONDON
1895

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ACT I

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THE OUTLAWRY

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ROBIN HOOD, *Earl of Huntingdon.*
KING RICHARD, *Cœur de Lion.*
PRINCE JOHN.
LITTLE JOHN,
WILL SCARLET,
FRIAR TUCK,
MUCH,
} *Followers of Robin Hood.*
A JUSTICIARY.
SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.
ABBOT OF ST. MARY'S.
SIR RICHARD LEA.
WALTER LEA, *son of Sir Richard Lea.*
MAID MARIAN, *daughter of Sir Richard Lea.*
KATE, *attendant on Marian.*
OLD WOMAN.

Retainers, Messengers, Merry Men, Mercenaries, Friars, Beggars, Sailors, Peasants (men and women), &c.

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THE FORESTERS

ACT I

SCENE I.—*The garden before* SIR RICHARD LEA'S *castle.*

KATE (*gathering flowers*).

These roses for my Lady Marian; these lilies to lighten Sir Richard's black room, where he sits and eats his heart for want of money to pay the Abbot.

[*Sings.*

The warrior Earl of Allendale,
He loved the Lady Anne;
The lady loved the master well,
The maid she loved the man.

All in the castle garden,
Or ever the day began,
The lady gave a rose to the Earl,
The maid a rose to the man.

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'I go to fight in Scotland
With many a savage clan;'
The lady gave her hand to the Earl,
The maid her hand to the man.

'Farewell, farewell, my warrior Earl!'
And ever a tear down ran.
She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,
And the maid a kiss to the man.

Enter four ragged RETAINERS.

FIRST RETAINER.

You do well, Mistress Kate, to sing and to gather roses. You be fed with tit-bits, you, and we be dogs that have only the bones, till we be only bones our own selves.

SECOND RETAINER.

I am fed with tit-bits no more than you are, but I keep a good heart and make the most of it, and, truth to say, Sir Richard and my Lady Marian fare wellnigh as sparely as their people.

THIRD RETAINER.

And look at our suits, out at knee, out at elbow. We be more like scarecrows in a field than decent serving men; and then, I pray you, look at Robin Earl of Huntingdon's men.

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FIRST RETAINER.

She hath looked well at one of 'em, Little John.

THIRD RETAINER.

Ay, how fine they be in their liveries, and each of 'em as full of meat as an egg, and as sleek and as round-about as a mellow codlin.

FOURTH RETAINER.

But I be worse off than any of you, for I be lean by nature, and if you cram me crop-full I be little better than Famine in the picture, but if you starve me I be Gaffer Death himself. I would like to show you, Mistress Kate, how bare and spare I be on the rib: I be lanker than an old horse turned out to die on the common.

KATE.

Spare me thy spare ribs, I pray thee; but now I ask you all, did none of you love young Walter Lea?

FIRST RETAINER.

Ay, if he had not gone to fight the king's battles, we should have better battels at home.

KATE.

Right as an Oxford scholar, but the boy was taken prisoner by the Moors.

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FIRST RETAINER.

Ay.

KATE.

And Sir Richard was told he might be ransomed for two thousand marks in gold.

FIRST RETAINER.

Ay.

KATE.

Then he borrowed the monies from the Abbot of York, the Sheriff's brother. And if they be not paid back at the end of the year, the land goes to the Abbot.

FIRST RETAINER.

No news of young Walter?

KATE.

None, nor of the gold, nor the man who took out the gold: but now ye know why we live so stintedly, and why ye have so few grains to peck at. Sir Richard must scrape and scrape till he get to the land again. Come, come, why do ye loiter here? Carry fresh rushes into the dining-hall, for those that are there they be so greasy and smell so vilely that my Lady Marian holds her nose when she steps across it.

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FOURTH RETAINER.

Why there, now! that very word 'greasy' hath a kind of unction in it, a smack of relish about it. The rats have gnawed 'em already. I pray Heaven we may not have to take to the rushes. [*Exeunt.*

KATE.

Poor fellows!

The lady gave her hand to the Earl,
The maid her hand to the man.

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE JOHN.

My master, Robin the Earl, is always a-telling us that every man, for the sake of the great blessed Mother in heaven, and for the love of his own little mother on earth, should handle all womankind gently, and hold them in all honour, and speak small to 'em, and not scare 'em, but go about to come at their love with all manner of homages, and observances, and circumbendibuses.

KATE.

The lady gave a rose to the Earl,
The maid a rose to the man.

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LITTLE JOHN (*seeing her*).

O the sacred little thing! What a shape! what lovely arms! A rose to the man! Ay, the man had given her a rose and she gave him another.

KATE.

Shall I keep one little rose for Little John? No.

LITTLE JOHN.

There, there! You see I was right. She hath a tenderness toward me, but is too shy to show it. It is in her, in the woman, and the man must bring it out of her.

KATE.

She gave a weeping kiss to the Earl,
The maid a kiss to the man.

LITTLE JOHN.

Did she? But there I am sure the ballad is at fault. It should have told us how the man first kissed the maid. She doesn't see me. Shall I be bold? shall I touch her? shall I give her the first kiss? O sweet Kate, my first love, the first kiss, the first kiss!

KATE (*turns and kisses him*).

Why lookest thou so amazed?

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LITTLE JOHN.

I cannot tell; but I came to give thee the first kiss, and thou hast given it me.

KATE.

But if a man and a maid care for one another, does it matter so much if the maid give the first kiss?

LITTLE JOHN.

I cannot tell, but I had sooner have given thee the first kiss. I was dreaming of it all the way hither.

KATE.

Dream of it, then, all the way back, for now I will have none of it.

LITTLE JOHN.

Nay, now thou hast given me the man's kiss, let me give thee the maid's.

KATE.

If thou draw one inch nearer, I will give thee a buffet on the face.

LITTLE JOHN.

Wilt thou not give me rather the little rose for Little John?

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KATE (*throws it down and tramples on it*).

There! [KATE *seeing* MARIAN *exit hurriedly.*

Enter MARIAN (*singing*).

Love flew in at the window,
As Wealth walk'd in at the door.
'You have come for you saw Wealth coming,' said I.
But he flutter'd his wings with a sweet little cry,
I'll cleave to you rich or poor.

Wealth dropt out of the window,
Poverty crept thro' the door.
'Well now you would fain follow Wealth,' said I,
But he flutter'd his wings as he gave me the lie,
I cling to you all the more.

LITTLE JOHN.

Thanks, my lady—inasmuch as I am a true believer in true love myself, and your Ladyship hath sung the old proverb out of fashion.

MARIAN.

Ay but thou hast ruffled my woman, Little John. She hath the fire in her face and the dew in her eyes. I believed thee to be too solemn and formal to be a ruffler. Out upon thee!

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LITTLE JOHN.

I am no ruffler, my lady; but I pray you, my lady, if a man and a maid love one another, may the maid give the first kiss?

MARIAN.

It will be all the more gracious of her if she do.

LITTLE JOHN.

I cannot tell. Manners be so corrupt, and these are the days of Prince John. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (*reading a bond*).

SIR RICHARD.

Marian!

MARIAN.

Father!

SIR RICHARD.

Who parted from thee even now?

MARIAN.

That strange starched stiff creature, Little John, the Earl's man. He would grapple with a lion like the King, and is flustered by a girl's kiss.

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SIR RICHARD.

There never was an Earl so true a friend of the people as Lord Robin of Huntingdon.

MARIAN.

A gallant Earl. I love him as I hate John.

SIR RICHARD.

I fear me he hath wasted his revenues in the service of our good king Richard against the party of John, as I have done, as I have done: and where is Richard?

MARIAN.

Cleave to him, father! he will come home at last.

SIR RICHARD.

I trust he will, but if he do not I and thou are but beggars.

MARIAN.

We will be beggar'd then and be true to the King.

SIR RICHARD.

Thou speakest like a fool or a woman. Canst thou endure to be a beggar whose whole life hath been

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folded like a blossom in the sheath, like a careless sleeper in the down; who never hast felt a want, to whom all things, up to this present, have come as freely as heaven's air and mother's milk?

MARIAN.

Tut, father! I am none of your delicate Norman maidens who can only broider and mayhap ride a-hawking with the help of the men. I can bake and I can brew, and by all the saints I can shoot almost as closely with the bow as the great Earl himself. I have played at the foils too with Kate: but is not to-day his birthday?

SIR RICHARD.

Dost thou love him indeed, that thou keepest a record of his birthdays? Thou knowest that the Sheriff of Nottingham loves thee.

MARIAN.

The Sheriff dare to love me? me who worship Robin the great Earl of Huntingdon? I love him as a damsel of his day might have loved Harold the Saxon, or Hereward the Wake. They both fought against the tyranny of the kings, the Normans. But then your Sheriff, your little man, if he dare to fight

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at all, would fight for his rents, his leases, his houses, his monies, his oxen, his dinners, himself. Now your great man, your Robin, all England's Robin, fights not for himself but for the people of England. This John—this Norman tyranny—the stream is bearing us all down, and our little Sheriff will ever swim with the stream! but our great man, our Robin, against it. And how often in old histories have the great men striven against the stream, and how often in the long sweep of years to come must the great man strive against it again to save his country, and the liberties of his people! God bless our well-beloved Robin, Earl of Huntingdon.

SIR RICHARD.

Ay, ay. He wore thy colours once at a tourney. I am old and forget. Was Prince John there?

MARIAN.

The Sheriff of Nottingham was there—not John.

SIR RICHARD.

Beware of John and the Sheriff of Nottingham. They hunt in couples, and when they look at a maid they blast her.

MARIAN.

Then the maid is not high-hearted enough.

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SIR RICHARD.

There—there—be not a fool again. Their aim is ever at that which flies highest—but O girl, girl, I am almost in despair. Those two thousand marks lent me by the Abbot for the ransom of my son Walter—I believed this Abbot of the party of King Richard, and he hath sold himself to that beast John—they must be paid in a year and a month, or I lose the land. There is one that should be grateful to me overseas, a Count in Brittany—he lives near Quimper. I saved his life once in battle. He has monies. I will go to him. I saved him. I will try him. I am all but sure of him. I will go to him.

MARIAN.

And I will follow thee, and God help us both.

SIR RICHARD.

Child, thou shouldst marry one who will pay the mortgage. This Robin, this Earl of Huntingdon—he is a friend of Richard—I know not, but he may save the land, he may save the land.

MARIAN (*showing a cross hung round her neck*).

Father, you see this cross?

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SIR RICHARD.

Ay the King, thy godfather, gave it thee when a baby.

MARIAN.

And he said that whenever I married he would give me away, and on this cross I have sworn [*kisses it*] that till I myself pass away, there is no other man that shall give me away.

SIR RICHARD.

Lo there—thou art fool again—I am all as loyal as thyself, but what a vow! what a vow!

Re-enter LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE JOHN.

My Lady Marian, your woman so flustered me that I forgot my message from the Earl. To-day he hath accomplished his thirtieth birthday, and he prays your ladyship and your ladyship's father to be present at his banquet to-night.

MARIAN.

Say, we will come.

LITTLE JOHN.

And I pray you, my lady, to stand between me and your woman, Kate.

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MARIAN.

I will speak with her.

LITTLE JOHN.

I thank you, my lady, and I wish you and your ladyship's father a most exceedingly good morning.

[*Exit.*

SIR RICHARD.

Thou hast answered for me, but I know not if I will let thee go.

MARIAN.

I mean to go.

SIR RICHARD.

Not if I barred thee up in thy chamber, like a bird in a cage.

MARIAN.

Then I would drop from the casement, like a spider.

SIR RICHARD.

But I would hoist the drawbridge, like thy master.

MARIAN.

And I would swim the moat, like an otter.

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SIR RICHARD.

But I would set my men-at-arms to oppose thee, like the Lord of the Castle.

MARIAN.

And I would break through them all, like the King of England.

SIR RICHARD.

Well, thou shalt go, but O the land! the land! my great great great grandfather, my great great grandfather, my great grandfather, my grandfather and my own father—they were born and bred on it—it was their mother—they have trodden it for half a thousand years, and whenever I set my own foot on it I say to it, Thou art mine, and it answers, I am thine to the very heart of the earth—but now I have lost my gold, I have lost my son, and I shall lose my land also. Down to the devil with this bond that beggars me! [*Flings down the bond.*

MARIAN.

Take it again, dear father, be not wroth at the dumb parchment. Sufficient for the day, dear father! let us be merry to-night at the banquet.

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SCENE II.—*A banqueting-hall in the house of* ROBIN HOOD *the Earl of Huntingdon. Doors open into a banqueting-hall where he is at feast with his friends.*

DRINKING SONG.

Long live Richard,
Robin and Richard!
Long live Richard!
Down with John!
Drink to the Lion-heart
Every one!
Pledge the Plantagenet,
Him that is gone.
Who knows whither?
God's good Angel
Help him back hither,
And down with John!
Long live Robin,
Robin and Richard!
Long live Robin,
And down with John!

Enter PRINCE JOHN *disguised as a monk and the* SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM. *Cries of 'Down with John,' 'Long live King Richard,' 'Down with John.'*

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PRINCE JOHN.

Down with John! ha. Shall I be known? is my disguise perfect?

SHERIFF.

Perfect—who should know you for Prince John, so that you keep the cowl down and speak not?

[*Shouts from the banquet-room.*

PRINCE JOHN.

Thou and I will still these revelries presently.

[*Shouts*, 'Long live King Richard!'

I come here to see this daughter of Sir Richard of the Lea and if her beauties answer their report. If so—

SHERIFF.

If so— [*Shouts*, 'Down with John!'

PRINCE JOHN.

You hear!

SHERIFF.

Yes, my lord, fear not. I will answer for you.

Enter LITTLE JOHN, SCARLET, MUCH, *&c., from the banquet singing a snatch of the Drinking Song.*

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LITTLE JOHN.

I am a silent man myself, and all the more wonder at our Earl. What a wealth of words—O Lord, I will live and die for King Richard—not so much for the cause as for the Earl. O Lord, I am easily led by words, but I think the Earl hath right. Scarlet, hath not the Earl right? What makes thee so down in the mouth?

SCARLET.

I doubt not, I doubt not, and though I be down in the mouth, I will swear by the head of the Earl.

LITTLE JOHN.

Thou Much, miller's son, hath not the Earl right?

MUCH.

More water goes by the mill than the miller wots of, and more goes to make right than I know of, but for all that I will swear the Earl hath right. But they are coming hither for the dance—

Enter FRIAR TUCK.

be they not, Friar Tuck? Thou art the Earl's confessor and shouldst know.

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TUCK.

Ay, ay, and but that I am a man of weight, and the weight of the church to boot on my shoulders, I would dance too. Fa, la, la, fa, la, la. [*Capering.*

MUCH.

But doth not the weight of the flesh at odd times overbalance the weight of the church, ha friar?

TUCK.

Homo sum. I love my dinner—but I can fast, I can fast; and as to other frailties of the flesh—out upon thee! Homo sum, sed virgo sum, I am a virgin, my masters, I am a virgin.

MUCH.

And a virgin, my masters, three yards about the waist is like to remain a virgin, for who could embrace such an armful of joy?

TUCK.

Knave, there is a lot of wild fellows in Sherwood Forest who hold by King Richard. If ever I meet thee there, I will break thy sconce with my quarter-staff.

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Enter from the banqueting-hall SIR RICHARD LEA, ROBIN HOOD, *&c.*

ROBIN.

My guests and friends, Sir Richard, all of you
Who deign to honour this my thirtieth year,
And some of you were prophets that I might be,
Now that the sun our King is gone, the light
Of these dark hours; but this new moon, I fear,
Is darkness. Nay, this may be the last time
When I shall hold my birthday in this hall:
I may be outlaw'd, I have heard a rumour.

ALL.

God forbid!

ROBIN.

Nay, but we have no news of Richard yet,
And ye did wrong in crying 'Down with John;'
For be he dead, then John may be our King.

ALL.

God forbid!

ROBIN.

Ay God forbid,
But if it be so we must bear with John.

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The man is able enough—no lack of wit,
And apt at arms and shrewd in policy.
Courteous enough too when he wills; and yet
I hate him for his want of chivalry.
He that can pluck the flower of maidenhood
From off the stalk and trample it in the mire,
And boast that he hath trampled it. I hate him,
I hate the man. I may not hate the King
For aught I know,
So that our Barons bring his baseness under.
I think they will be mightier than the king.

[*Dance music.*

(MARIAN *enters with other damsels.*)

ROBIN.

The high Heaven guard thee from his wantonness
Who art the fairest flower of maidenhood
That ever blossom'd on this English isle.

MARIAN.

Cloud not thy birthday with one fear for me.
My lord, myself and my good father pray
Thy thirtieth summer may be thirty-fold
As happy as any of those that went before.

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ROBIN.

My Lady Marian you can make it so
If you will deign to tread a measure with me.

MARIAN.

Full willingly, my lord.

[*They dance.*

ROBIN (*after dance*).

My Lady, will you answer me a question?

MARIAN.

Any that you may ask.

ROBIN.

A question that every true man asks of a woman once in his life.

MARIAN.

I will not answer it, my lord, till King Richard come home again.

PRINCE JOHN (*to* SHERIFF).

How she looks up at him, how she holds her face!
Now if she kiss him, I will have his head.

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SHERIFF.

Peace, my lord; the Earl and Sir Richard come this way.

ROBIN.

Must you have these monies before the year and the month end?

SIR RICHARD.

Or I forfeit my land to the Abbot. I must pass overseas to one that I trust will help me.

ROBIN.

Leaving your fair Marian alone here.

SIR RICHARD.

Ay, for she hath somewhat of the lioness in her, and there be men-at-arms to guard her.

[ROBIN, SIR RICHARD, *and* MARIAN *pass on.*

PRINCE JOHN (*to* SHERIFF).

Why that will be our opportunity
When I and thou will rob the nest of her.

SHERIFF.

Good Prince, art thou in need of any gold?

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PRINCE JOHN.

Gold? why? not now.

SHERIFF.

I would give thee any gold
So that myself alone might rob the nest.

PRINCE JOHN.

Well, well then, thou shalt rob the nest alone.

SHERIFF.

Swear to me by that relic on thy neck.

PRINCE JOHN.

I swear then by this relic on my neck—
No, no, I will not swear by this; I keep it
For holy vows made to the blessed Saints
Not pleasures, women's matters.
Dost thou mistrust me? Am I not thy friend?
Beware, man, lest thou lose thy faith in me.
I love thee much; and as I *am* thy friend,
I promise thee to make this Marian thine.
Go now and ask the maid to dance with thee,
And learn from her if she do love this Earl.

SHERIFF (*advancing toward* MARIAN *and* ROBIN).

Pretty mistress!

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ROBIN.

What art thou, man? Sheriff of Nottingham?

SHERIFF.

Ay, my lord. I and my friend, this monk, were here belated, and seeing the hospitable lights in your castle, and knowing the fame of your hospitality, we ventured in uninvited.

ROBIN.

You are welcome, though I fear you be of those who hold more by John than Richard.

SHERIFF.

True, for through John I had my sheriffship. I am John's till Richard come back again, and then I am Richard's. Pretty mistress, will you dance?

[*They dance.*

ROBIN (*talking to* PRINCE JOHN).

What monk of what convent art thou? Why wearest thou thy cowl to hide thy face?

[PRINCE JOHN *shakes his head.*

Is he deaf, or dumb, or daft, or drunk belike?

[PRINCE JOHN *shakes his head.*

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Why comest thou like a death's head at my feast?

[PRINCE JOHN *points to the* SHERIFF,
who is dancing with MARIAN.

Is he thy mouthpiece, thine interpreter?

[PRINCE JOHN *nods.*

SHERIFF (*to* MARIAN *as they pass*).

Beware of John!

MARIAN.

I hate him.

SHERIFF.

Would you cast
An eye of favour on me, I would pay
My brother all his debt and save the land.

MARIAN.

I cannot answer thee till Richard come.

SHERIFF.

And when he comes?

MARIAN.

Well, you must wait till then.

LITTLE JOHN (*dancing with* KATE).

Is it made up? Will you kiss me?

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KATE.

You shall give me the first kiss.

LITTLE JOHN.

There (*kisses her*). Now thine.

KATE.

You shall wait for mine till Sir Richard has paid the Abbot. [*They pass on.*

[*The* SHERIFF *leaves* MARIAN *with her father and comes toward* ROBIN.

ROBIN (*to* SHERIFF, PRINCE JOHN *standing by*).

Sheriff, thy friend, this monk, is but a statue.

SHERIFF.

Pardon him, my lord: he is a holy Palmer, bounden by a vow not to show his face, nor to speak word to anyone, till he join King Richard in the Holy Land.

ROBIN.

Going to the Holy Land to Richard! Give me thy hand and tell him—— Why, what a cold grasp is thine—as if thou didst repent thy courtesy even in the doing it. That is no true man's hand. I hate hidden faces.

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SHERIFF.

Pardon him again, I pray you; but the twilight of the coming day already glimmers in the east. We thank you, and farewell.

ROBIN.

Farewell, farewell. I hate hidden faces.

[*Exeunt* PRINCE JOHN *and* SHERIFF.

SIR RICHARD (*coming forward with* MAID MARIAN).

How close the Sheriff peer'd into thine eyes!
What did he say to thee?

MARIAN.

Bade me beware
Of John: what maid but would beware of John?

SIR RICHARD.

What else?

MARIAN.

I care not what he said.

SIR RICHARD.

What else?

MARIAN.

That if I cast an eye of favour on him,
Himself would pay this mortgage to his brother,
And save the land.

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SIR RICHARD.

Did he say so, the Sheriff?

ROBIN.

I fear this Abbot is a heart of flint,
Hard as the stones of his abbey.
O good Sir Richard,
I am sorry my exchequer runs so low
I cannot help you in this exigency;
For though my men and I flash out at times
Of festival like burnish'd summer-flies,
We make but one hour's buzz, are only like
The rainbow of a momentary sun.
I am mortgaged as thyself.

SIR RICHARD.

Ay! I warrant thee—thou canst not be sorrier than I am. Come away, daughter.

ROBIN.

Farewell, Sir Richard; farewell, sweet Marian.

MARIAN.

Till better times.

ROBIN.

But if the better times should never come?

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MARIAN.

Then I shall be no worse.

ROBIN.

And if the worst time come?

MARIAN.

Why then I will be better than the time.

ROBIN.

This ring my mother gave me: it was her own
Betrothal ring. She pray'd me when I loved
A maid with all my heart to pass it down
A finger of that hand which should be mine
Thereafter. Will you have it? Will you wear it?

MARIAN.

Ay, noble Earl, and never part with it.

SIR RICHARD LEA (*coming up*).

Not till she clean forget thee, noble Earl.

MARIAN.

Forget *him*—never—by this Holy Cross
Which good King Richard gave me when a child—
Never!

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Not while the swallow skims along the ground,
And while the lark flies up and touches heaven!
Not while the smoke floats from the cottage roof,
And the white cloud is roll'd along the sky!
Not while the rivulet babbles by the door,
And the great breaker beats upon the beach!
Never—
Till Nature, high and low, and great and small
Forgets herself, and all her loves and hates
Sink again into chaos.

SIR RICHARD LEA.

Away! away!

[*Exeunt to music.*

SCENE III.—*Same as Scene II.*

ROBIN *and his men.*

ROBIN.

All gone!—my ring—I am happy—should be happy.
She took my ring. I trust she loves me—yet
I heard this Sheriff tell her he would pay
The mortgage if she favour'd him. I fear
Not her, the father's power upon her.
Friends, (*to his men*)
I am only merry for an hour or two

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Upon a birthday: if this life of ours
Be a good glad thing, why should we make us merry
Because a year of it is gone? but Hope
Smiles from the threshold of the year to come
Whispering 'it will be happier,' and old faces
Press round us, and warm hands close with warm hands,
And thro' the blood the wine leaps to the brain
Like April sap to the topmost tree, that shoots
New buds to heaven, whereon the throstle rock'd
Sings a new song to the new year—and you
Strike up a song, my friends, and then to bed.

LITTLE JOHN.

What will you have, my lord?

ROBIN.

'To sleep! to sleep!'

LITTLE JOHN.

There is a touch of sadness in it, my lord,
But ill befitting such a festal day.

ROBIN.

I have a touch of sadness in myself.
Sing.

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SONG.

To sleep! to sleep! The long bright day is done,
And darkness rises from the fallen sun.
To sleep! to sleep!
Whate'er thy joys, they vanish with the day;
Whate'er thy griefs, in sleep they fade away.
To sleep! to sleep!
Sleep, mournful heart, and let the past be past!
Sleep, happy soul! all life will sleep at last.
To sleep! to sleep!

[*A trumpet blown at the gates.*

ROBIN.

Who breaks the stillness of the morning thus?

LITTLE JOHN (*going out and returning*).

It is a royal messenger, my lord:
I trust he brings us news of the King's coming.

Enter a PURSUIVANT *who reads.*

O yes, O yes, O yes! In the name of the Regent. Thou, Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon art attainted and hast lost thine earldom of Huntingdon. Moreover thou art dispossessed of all thy lands, goods, and chattels; and by virtue of this writ, whereas

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Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon by force and arms hath trespassed against the king in divers manners, therefore by the judgment of the officers of the said lord king, according to the law and custom of the kingdom of England Robin Hood Earl of Huntingdon is outlawed and banished.

ROBIN.

I have shelter'd some that broke the forest laws.
This is irregular and the work of John.
['Irregular, irregular! (*tumult*) Down with
him, tear his coat from his back!'

MESSENGER.

Ho there! ho there, the Sheriff's men without!

ROBIN.

Nay, let them be, man, let them be. We yield.
How should we cope with John? The London
folkmote
Has made him all but king, and he hath seized
On half the royal castles. Let him alone! (*to his men*)
A worthy messenger! how should he help it?
Shall *we* too work injustice? what, thou shakest!
Here, here—a cup of wine—drink and begone!
[*Exit* MESSENGER.

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We will away in four-and-twenty hours,
But shall we leave our England?

TUCK.

Robin, Earl—

ROBIN.

Let be the Earl. Henceforth I am no more
Then plain man to plain man.

TUCK.

Well, then, plain man,
There be good fellows there in merry Sherwood
That hold by Richard, tho' they kill his deer.

ROBIN.

In Sherwood Forest. I have heard of them.
Have they no leader?

TUCK.

Each man for his own.
Be thou their leader and they will all of them
Swarm to thy voice like bees to the brass pan.

ROBIN.

They hold by Richard—the wild wood! to cast
All threadbare household habit, mix with all

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The lusty life of wood and underwood,
Hawk, buzzard, jay, the mavis and the merle,
The tawny squirrel vaulting thro' the boughs,
The deer, the highback'd polecat, the wild boar,
The burrowing badger—By St. Nicholas
I have a sudden passion for the wild wood—
We should be free as air in the wild wood—
What say you? shall we go? Your hands, your hands!
[*Gives his hand to each.*
You, Scarlet, you are always moody here.

SCARLET.

'Tis for no lack of love to you, my lord,
But lack of happiness in a blatant wife.
She broke my head on Tuesday with a dish.
I would have thwack'd the woman, but I did not,
Because thou sayest such fine things of women,
But I shall have to thwack her if I stay.

ROBIN.

Would it be better for thee in the wood?

SCARLET.

Ay, so she did not follow me to the wood.

ROBIN.

Then, Scarlet, thou at least wilt go with me.
Thou, Much, the miller's son, I knew thy father:

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He was a manly man, as thou art, Much,
And gray before his time as thou art, Much.

MUCH.

It is the trick of the family, my lord.
There was a song he made to the turning wheel—

ROBIN.

'Turn! turn!' but I forget it.

MUCH.

I can sing it.

ROBIN.

Not now, good Much! And thou, dear Little John,
Who hast that worship for me which Heaven knows
I ill deserve—you love me, all of you,
But I am outlaw'd, and if caught, I die.
Your hands again. All thanks for all your service;
But if you follow me, you may die with me.

ALL.

We will live and die with thee, we will live and die with thee.

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II

THE FLIGHT OF MARIAN

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ACT II

SCENE I.—*A broad forest glade, woodman's hut at one side with half-door,* FORESTERS *are looking to their bows and arrows, or polishing their swords.*

FORESTERS *sing* (*as they disperse to their work*).

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no hearts like English hearts
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen
So tall and bold as they be.

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(Full chorus.) *And these will strike for England*
And man and maid be free
To foil and spoil the tyrant
Beneath the greenwood tree.

There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no wives like English wives
So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no maids like English maids
So beautiful as they be.

(Full chorus.) *And these shall wed with freemen,*
And all their sons be free,
To sing the songs of England
Beneath the greenwood tree.

ROBIN (*alone*).

My lonely hour!
The king of day hath stept from off his throne,
Flung by the golden mantle of the cloud,
And sets, a naked fire. The King of England
Perchance this day may sink as gloriously,

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Red with his own and enemy's blood—but no!
We hear he is in prison. It is my birthday.
I have reign'd one year in the wild wood. My mother,
For whose sake, and the blessed Queen of Heaven,
I reverence all women, bad me, dying,
Whene'er this day should come about, to carve
One lone hour from it, so to meditate
Upon my greater nearness to the birthday
Of the after-life, when all the sheeted dead
Are shaken from their stillness in the grave
By the last trumpet.
Am I worse or better?
I am outlaw'd. I am none the worse for that.
I held for Richard, and I hated John.
I am a thief, ay, and a king of thieves.
Ay! but we rob the robber, wrong the wronger,
And what we wring from them we give the poor.
I am none the worse for that, and all the better
For this free forest-life, for while I sat
Among my thralls in my baronial hall
The groining hid the heavens; but since I breathed,
A houseless head beneath the sun and stars,
The soul of the woods hath stricken thro' my blood,
The love of freedom, the desire of God,
The hope of larger life hereafter, more
Tenfold than under roof. [*Horn blown.*
True, were I taken

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They would prick out my sight. A price is set
On this poor head; but I believe there lives
No man who truly loves and truly rules
His following, but can keep his followers true.
I am one with mine. Traitors are rarely bred
Save under traitor kings. Our vice-king John,
True king of vice—true play on words—our John
By his Norman arrogance and dissoluteness,
Hath made *me* king of all the discontent
Of England up thro' all the forest land
North to the Tyne: being outlaw'd in a land
Where law lies dead, we make ourselves the law.
Why break you thus upon my lonely hour?

Enter LITTLE JOHN *and* KATE.

LITTLE JOHN.

I found this white doe wandering thro' the wood,
Not thine, but mine. I have shot her thro' the heart.

KATE.

He lies, my lord. I have shot *him* thro' the heart.

ROBIN.

My God, thou art the very woman who waits
On my dear Marian. Tell me, tell me of her.
Thou comest a very angel out of heaven.
Where is she? and how fares she?

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KATE.

O my good lord,
I am but an angel by reflected light.
Your heaven is vacant of your angel. John—
Shame on him!—
Stole on her, she was walking in the garden,
And after some slight speech about the Sheriff
He caught her round the waist, whereon she struck him,
And fled into the castle. She and Sir Richard
Have past away, I know not where; and I
Was left alone, and knowing as I did
That I had shot him thro' the heart, I came
To eat him up and make an end of him.

LITTLE JOHN.

In kisses?

KATE.

You, how dare you mention kisses?
But I am weary pacing thro' the wood.
Show me some cave or cabin where I may rest.

ROBIN.

Go with him. I will talk with thee anon.

[*Exeunt* LITTLE JOHN *and* KATE.

She struck him, my brave Marian, struck the Prince,
The serpent that had crept into the garden

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And coil'd himself about her sacred waist.
I think I should have stricken him to the death.
He never will forgive her.
O the Sheriff
Would pay this cursed mortgage to his brother
If Marian would marry him; and the son
Is most like dead—if so the land may come
To Marian, and they rate the land five-fold
The worth of the mortgage, and who marries her
Marries the land. Most honourable Sheriff!
(*Passionately*) Gone, and it may be gone for evermore!
O would that I could see her for a moment
Glide like a light across these woodland ways!
Tho' in one moment she should glance away,
I should be happier for it all the year.
O would she moved beside me like my shadow!
O would she stood before me as my queen,
To make this Sherwood Eden o'er again,
And these rough oaks the palms of Paradise!

Ah! but who be those three yonder with bows?—not of my band—the Sheriff, and by heaven, Prince John himself and one of those mercenaries that suck the blood of England. My people are all scattered I know not where. Have they come for me? Here is the witch's hut. The fool-people call her a witch—a good witch to me! I will shelter here.

[*Knocks at the door of the hut.*

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OLD WOMAN *comes out.*

OLD WOMAN (*kisses his hand*).

Ah dear Robin! ah noble captain, friend of the poor!

ROBIN.

I am chased by my foes. I have forgotten my horn that calls my men together. Disguise me—thy gown and thy coif.

OLD WOMAN.

Come in, come in; I would give my life for thee, for when the Sheriff had taken all our goods for the King without paying, our horse and our little cart——

ROBIN.

Quick, good mother, quick!

OLD WOMAN.

Ay, ay, gown, coif, and petticoat, and the old woman's blessing with them to the last fringe.

[*They go in.*

Enter PRINCE JOHN, SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM, *and* MERCENARY.

PRINCE JOHN.

Did we not hear the two would pass this way?
They must have past. Here is a woodman's hut.

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MERCENARY.

Take heed, take heed! in Nottingham they say
There bides a foul witch somewhere hereabout.

SHERIFF.

Not in this hut I take it.

PRINCE JOHN.

Why not here?

SHERIFF.

I saw a man go in, my lord.

PRINCE JOHN.

Not two?

SHERIFF.

No, my lord, one.

PRINCE JOHN.

Make for the cottage then!

Interior of the hut.

ROBIN *disguised as old woman.*

PRINCE JOHN (*without*).

Knock again! knock again!

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ROBIN (*to* OLD WOMAN).

Get thee into the closet there, and make a ghostly wail ever and anon to scare 'em.

OLD WOMAN.

I will, I will, good Robin. [*Goes into closet.*

PRINCE JOHN (*without*).

Open, open, or I will drive the door from the doorpost.

ROBIN (*opens door*).

Come in, come in.

PRINCE JOHN.

Why did ye keep us at the door so long?

ROBIN (*curtseying*).

I was afear'd it was the ghost, your worship.

PRINCE JOHN.

Ghost! did one in white pass?

ROBIN (*curtseying*).

No, your worship.

PRINCE JOHN.

Did two knights pass?

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ROBIN (*curtseying*).

No, your worship.

SHERIFF.

I fear me we have lost our labour, then.

PRINCE JOHN.

Except this old hag have been bribed to lie.

ROBIN.

We old hags should be bribed to speak truth, for, God help us, we lie by nature.

PRINCE JOHN.

There was a man just now that enter'd here?

ROBIN.

There is but one old woman in the hut.

[OLD WOMAN *yells.*

ROBIN.

I crave your worship's pardon. There is yet another old woman. She was murdered here a hundred year ago, and whenever a murder is to be done again she yells out i' this way—so they say, your worship.

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MERCENARY.

Now, if I hadn't a sprig o' wickentree sewn into my dress, I should run.

PRINCE JOHN.

Tut! tut! the scream of some wild woodland thing.
How came we to be parted from our men?
We shouted, and *they* shouted, as I thought,
But shout and echo play'd into each other
So hollowly we knew not which was which.

ROBIN.

The wood is full of echoes, owls, elfs, ouphes, oafs, ghosts o' the mist, wills-o'-the-wisp; only they that be bred in it can find their way a-nights in it.

PRINCE JOHN.

I am footsore and famish'd therewithal.
Is there aught there? [*Pointing to cupboard.*

ROBIN.

Naught for the likes o' you.

PRINCE JOHN.

Speak straight out, crookback.

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ROBIN.

Sour milk and black bread.

PRINCE JOHN.

Well, set them forth. I could eat anything.

[*He sets out a table with black bread.*

This is mere marble. Old hag, how should thy one tooth drill thro' this?

ROBIN.

Nay, by St. Gemini, I ha' two; and since the Sheriff left me naught but an empty belly, they can meet upon anything thro' a millstone. You gentles that live upo' manchet-bread and marchpane, what should you know o' the food o' the poor? Look you here, before you can eat it you must hack it with a hatchet, break it all to pieces, as you break the poor, as you would hack at Robin Hood if you could light upon him (*hacks it and flings two pieces*). There's for you, and there's for you—and the old woman's welcome.

PRINCE JOHN.

The old wretch is mad, and her bread is beyond me: and the milk—faugh! Hast thou anything to sweeten this?

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ROBIN.

Here's a pot o' wild honey from an old oak, saving your sweet reverences.

SHERIFF.

Thou hast a cow then, hast thou?

ROBIN.

Ay, for when the Sheriff took my little horse for the King without paying for it——

SHERIFF.

How hadst thou then the means to buy a cow?

ROBIN.

Eh, I would ha' given my whole body to the King had *he* asked for it, like the woman at Acre when the Turk shot her as she was helping to build the mound against the city. I ha' served the King living, says she, and let me serve him dead, says she; let me go to make the mound: bury me in the mound, says the woman.

SHERIFF.

Ay, but the cow?

ROBIN.

She was given me.

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SHERIFF.

By whom?

ROBIN.

By a thief.

SHERIFF.

Who, woman, who?

ROBIN (*sings*).

He was a forester good;
He was the cock o' the walk;
He was the king o' the wood.

Your worship may find another rhyme if you care to drag your brains for such a minnow.

SHERIFF.

That cow was mine. I have lost a cow from my meadow. Robin Hood was it? I thought as much. He will come to the gibbet at last.

[OLD WOMAN *yells.*

MERCENARY.

O sweet sir, talk not of cows. You anger the spirit.

PRINCE JOHN.

Anger the scritch-owl.

MERCENARY.

But, my lord, the scritch-owl bodes death, my lord.

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ROBIN.

I beseech you all to speak lower. Robin may be hard by wi' three-score of his men. He often looks in here by the moonshine. Beware of Robin.

[OLD WOMAN *yells*.

MERCENARY.

Ah, do you hear? There may be murder done.

SHERIFF.

Have you not finished, my lord?

ROBIN.

Thou hast crost him in love, and I have heard him swear he will be even wi' thee.

[OLD WOMAN *yells*.

MERCENARY.

Now is my heart so down in my heels that if I stay, I can't run.

SHERIFF.

Shall we not go?

ROBIN.

And, old hag tho' I be, I can spell the hand. Give me thine. Ay, ay, the line o' life is marked enow; but look, there is a cross line o' sudden death.

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I pray thee go, go, for tho' thou wouldst bar me fro' the milk o' my cow, I wouldn't have thy blood on my hearth.

PRINCE JOHN.

Why do you listen, man, to the old fool?

SHERIFF.

I will give thee a silver penny if thou wilt show us the way back to Nottingham.

ROBIN (*with a very low curtsey*).

All the sweet saints bless your worship for your alms to the old woman! but make haste then, and be silent in the wood. Follow me.

[*Takes his bow.*

(*They come out of the hut and close the door carefully.*)

Outside hut.

ROBIN.

Softly! softly! there may be a thief in every bush.

PRINCE JOHN.

How should this old lamester guide us? Where is thy goodman?

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ROBIN.

The saints were so kind to both on us that he was dead before he was born.

PRINCE JOHN.

Half-witted and a witch to boot! Mislead us, and I will have thy life! and what doest thou with that who art more bow-bent than the very bow thou carriest?

ROBIN.

I keep it to kill nightingales.

PRINCE JOHN.

Nightingales!

ROBIN.

You see, they are so fond o' their own voices that I cannot sleep o' nights by cause on 'em.

PRINCE JOHN.

True soul of the Saxon churl for whom song has no charm.

ROBIN.

Then I roast 'em, for I have nought else to live on (*whines*). O your honour, I pray you too to give me an alms. (*To* PRINCE JOHN.)

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SHERIFF.

This is no bow to hit nightingales; this is a true woodman's bow of the best yew-wood to slay the deer. Look, my lord, there goes one in the moonlight. Shoot!

PRINCE JOHN (*shoots*).

Missed! There goes another. Shoot, Sheriff!

SHERIFF (*shoots*).

Missed!

ROBIN.

And here comes another. Why, an old woman can shoot closer than you two.

PRINCE JOHN.

Shoot then, and if thou miss I will fasten thee to thine own doorpost and make thine old carcase a target for us three.

ROBIN (*raises himself upright, shoots, and hits*).

Hit! Did I not tell you an old woman could shoot better?

PRINCE JOHN.

Thou standest straight. Thou speakest manlike. Thou art no old woman—thou art disguised—thou art one of the thieves.

[*Makes a clutch at the gown, which comes in pieces and falls, showing* ROBIN *in his forester's dress.*

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SHERIFF.

It is the very captain of the thieves!

PRINCE JOHN.

We have him at last; we have him at advantage. Strike, Sheriff! Strike, mercenary!

[*They draw swords and attack him; he defends himself with his.*

Enter LITTLE JOHN.

LITTLE JOHN.

I have lodged my pretty Katekin in her bower. How now? Clashing of swords—three upon one, and that one our Robin! Rogues, have you no manhood? [*Draws and defends* ROBIN.

Enter SIR RICHARD LEA (*draws his sword*).

SIR RICHARD LEA.

Old as I am, I will not brook to see
Three upon two.

(MAID MARIAN *in the armour of a Red-cross Knight follows half unsheathing her sword and half seen.*)

Back! back! I charge thee, back!
Is this a game for thee to play at? Away.

(*She retires to the fringe of the copse.*)

[*He fights on* ROBIN'S *side. The other three are beaten off and exeunt.*

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Enter FRIAR TUCK.

FRIAR TUCK.

I am too late then with my quarterstaff!

ROBIN.

Quick, friar, follow them:
See whether there be more of 'em in the wood.

FRIAR TUCK.

On the gallop, on the gallop, Robin, like a deer from a dog, or a colt from a gad-fly, or a stump-tailed ox in May-time, or the cow that jumped over the moon. [*Exit.*

ROBIN.

Nay, nay, but softly, lest they spy thee, friar!

[*To* SIR RICHARD LEA *who reels.*

Take thou mine arm. Who art thou, gallant knight?

SIR RICHARD.

Robin, I am Sir Richard of the Lea.
Who be those three that I have fought withal?

ROBIN.

Prince John, the Sheriff, and a mercenary.

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SIR RICHARD.

Prince John again. We are flying from this John.
The Sheriff—I am grieved it was the Sheriff;
For, Robin, he must be my son-in-law.
Thou art an outlaw, and couldst never pay
The mortgage on my land. Thou wilt not see
My Marian more. So—so—I have presumed
Beyond my strength. Give me a draught of wine.

[MARIAN *comes forward.*

This is my son but late escaped from prison,
For whom I ran into my debt to the Abbot,
Two thousand marks in gold. I have paid him half.
That other thousand—shall I ever pay it?
A draught of wine.

ROBIN.

Our cellar is hard by.
Take him, good Little John, and give him wine.

[*Exit* SIR RICHARD *leaning on* LITTLE JOHN.

A brave old fellow but he angers me.

[*To* MAID MARIAN *who is following her father.*

Young Walter, nay, I pray thee, stay a moment.

MARIAN.

A moment for some matter of no moment!
Well—! take and use your moment, while you may.

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ROBIN.

Thou art her brother, and her voice is thine,
Her face is thine, and if thou be as gentle
Give me some news of my sweet Marian.
Where is she?

MARIAN.

Thy sweet Marian? I believe
She came with me into the forest here.

ROBIN.

She follow'd thee into the forest here?

MARIAN.

Nay—that, my friend, I am sure I did not say.

ROBIN.

Thou blowest hot and cold. Where is she then?

MARIAN.

Is she not here with thee?

ROBIN.

Would God she were!

MARIAN.

If not with thee I know not where she is.
She may have lighted on your fairies here,
And now be skipping in their fairy-rings,
And capering hand in hand with Oberon.

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ROBIN.

Peace!

MARIAN.

Or learning witchcraft of your woodland witch
And how to charm and waste the hearts of men.

ROBIN.

That is not brother-like.

MARIAN (*pointing to the sky*).

Or there perchance
Up yonder with the man i' the moon.

ROBIN.

No more!

MARIAN.

Or haply fallen a victim to the wolf.

ROBIN.

Tut! be there wolves in Sherwood?

MARIAN.

The wolf, John!

ROBIN.

Curse him! but thou art mocking me. Thou art
Her brother—I forgive thee. Come be thou
My brother too. She loves me.

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MARIAN.

Doth she so?

ROBIN.

Do you doubt me when I say she loves me, man?

MARIAN.

No, but my father will not lose his land,
Rather than that would wed her with the Sheriff.

ROBIN.

Thou hold'st with him?

MARIAN.

Yes, in some sort I do.
He is old and almost mad to keep the land.

ROBIN.

Thou hold'st with him?

MARIAN.

I tell thee, in some sort.

ROBIN (*angrily*).

Sort! sort! what sort? what sort of man art thou
For land, not love? Thou wilt inherit the land,
And so wouldst sell thy sister to the Sheriff,

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O thou unworthy brother of my dear Marian!
And now, I do bethink me, thou wast by
And never drewest sword to help the old man
When he was fighting.

MARIAN.

There were three to three.

ROBIN.

Thou shouldst have ta'en his place, and fought for him.

MARIAN.

He did it so well there was no call for me.

ROBIN.

My God!
That such a brother—*she* marry the Sheriff!
Come now, I fain would have a bout with thee.
It is but pastime—nay, I will not harm thee.
Draw!

MARIAN.

Earl, I would fight with any man but thee.

ROBIN.

Ay, ay, because I have a name for prowess.

MARIAN.

It is not that.

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ROBIN.

That! I believe thou fell'st into the hands
Of these same Moors thro' nature's baseness, criedst
'I yield' almost before the thing was ask'd,
And thro' thy lack of manhood hast betray'd
Thy father to the losing of his land.
Come, boy! 'tis but to see if thou canst fence.
Draw! [*Draws.*

MARIAN.

No, Sir Earl, I will not fight to-day.

ROBIN.

To-morrow then?

MARIAN.

Well, I will fight to-morrow.

ROBIN.

Give me thy glove upon it.

MARIAN (*pulls off her glove and gives it to him*).

There!

ROBIN.

O God!
What sparkles in the moonlight on thy hand?
[*Takes her hand.*

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In that great heat to wed her to the Sheriff
Thou hast robb'd my girl of her betrothal ring.

MARIAN.

No, no!

ROBIN.

What! do I not know mine own ring?

MARIAN.

I keep it for her.

ROBIN.

Nay, she swore it never
Should leave her finger. Give it me, by heaven,
Or I will force it from thee.

MARIAN.

O Robin, Robin!

ROBIN.

O my dear Marian,
Is it thou? is it thou? I fall before thee, clasp
Thy knees. I am ashamed. Thou shalt not marry
The Sheriff, but abide with me who love thee.
[*She moves from him, the moonlight falls upon her.*
O look! before the shadow of these dark oaks
Thou seem'st a saintly splendour out from heaven,

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Clothed with the mystic silver of her moon.
Speak but one word not only of forgiveness,
But to show thou art mortal.

MARIAN.

Mortal enough,
If love for thee be mortal. Lovers hold
True love immortal. Robin, tho' I love thee,
We cannot come together in this world.
Not mortal! after death, if after death——

ROBIN.

Life, life. I know not death. Why do you vex me
With raven-croaks of death and after death?

MARIAN.

And I and he are passing overseas:
He has a friend there will advance the monies,
So now the forest lawns are all as bright
As ways to heaven, I pray thee give us guides
To lead us thro' the windings of the wood.

ROBIN.

Must it be so? If it were so, myself
Would guide you thro' the forest to the sea.
But go not yet, stay with us, and when thy brother——

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MARIAN.

Robin, I ever held that saying false
That Love is blind, but thou hast proven it true.
Why—even your woodland squirrel sees the nut
Behind the shell, and thee however mask'd
I should have known. But thou—to dream that he
My brother, my dear Walter—now, perhaps,
Fetter'd and lash'd, a galley-slave, or closed
For ever in a Moorish tower, or wreckt
And dead beneath the midland ocean, he
As gentle as he's brave—that such as he
Would wrest from me the precious ring I promised
Never to part with—No, not he, nor any.
I would have battled for it to the death.
[*In her excitement she draws her sword.*
See, thou hast wrong'd my brother and myself.

ROBIN (*kneeling*).

See then, I kneel once more to be forgiven.

Enter SCARLET, MUCH, *several of the* FORESTERS, *rushing on.*

SCARLET.

Look! look! he kneels! he has anger'd the foul witch,
Who melts a waxen image by the fire,
And drains the heart and marrow from a man.

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MUCH.

Our Robin beaten, pleading for his life!
Seize on the knight! wrench his sword from him!

[*They all rush on* MARIAN.

ROBIN (*springing up and waving his hand*).

Back!
Back all of you! this is Maid Marian
Flying from John—disguised.

MEN.

Maid Marian? she?

SCARLET.

Captain, we saw thee cowering to a knight
And thought thou wert bewitch'd.

MARIAN.

You dared to dream
That our great Earl, the bravest English heart
Since Hereward the Wake, would cower to any
Of mortal build. Weak natures that impute
Themselves to their unlikes, and their own want
Of manhood to their leader! he would break,
Far as he might, the pówer of John—but you—
What rightful cause could grow to such a heat
As burns a wrong to ashes, if the followers

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Of him, who heads the movement, held him craven?
Robin—I know not, can I trust myself
With your brave band? in some of these may lodge
That baseness which for fear or monies, might
Betray me to the wild Prince.

ROBIN.

No, love, no!
Not any of these, I swear.

MEN.

No, no, we swear.

SCENE II.—*Another Glade in the Forest.*

ROBIN *and* MARIAN *passing.* *Enter* FORESTER.

FORESTER.

Knight, your good father had his draught of wine
And then he swoon'd away. He had been hurt,
And bled beneath his armour. Now he cries
'The land! the land!' Come to him.

MARIAN.

O my poor father!

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ROBIN.

Stay with us in this wood, till he recover.
We know all balms and simples of the field
To help a wound. Stay with us here, sweet love,
Maid Marian, till thou wed what man thou wilt.
All here will prize thee, honour, worship thee,
Crown thee with flowers; and he will soon be well:
All will be well.

MARIAN.

O lead me to my father!

[*As they are going out enter* LITTLE JOHN *and* KATE *who falls on the neck of* MARIAN.

KATE.

No, no, false knight, thou canst not hide thyself
From her who loves thee.

LITTLE JOHN.

What!
By all the devils in and out of Hell!
Wilt thou embrace thy sweetheart 'fore my face?
Quick with thy sword! the yeoman braves the knight.
There! (*strikes her with the flat of his sword*).

MARIAN (*laying about her*).

Are the men all mad? there then, and there!

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KATE.

O hold thy hand! this is our Marian.

LITTLE JOHN.

What! with this skill of fence! let go mine arm.

ROBIN.

Down with thy sword! She is my queen and thine,
The mistress of the band.

MARIAN (*sheathing her sword*).

A maiden now
Were ill-bested in these dark days of John,
Except she could defend her innocence.
O lead me to my father.

[*Exeunt* ROBIN *and* MARIAN.

LITTLE JOHN.

Speak to me,
I am like a boy now going to be whipt;
I know I have done amiss, have been a fool,
Speak to me, Kate, and say you pardon me!

KATE.

I never will speak word to thee again.
What? to mistrust the girl you say you love

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Is to mistrust your own love for your girl!
How should you love if you mistrust your love?

LITTLE JOHN.

O Kate, true love and jealousy are twins,
And love is joyful, innocent, beautiful,
And jealousy is wither'd, sour and ugly:
Yet are they twins and always go together.

KATE.

Well, well, until they cease to go together,
I am but a stone and a dead stock to thee.

LITTLE JOHN.

I thought I saw thee clasp and kiss a man
And it was but a woman. Pardon me.

KATE.

Ay, for I much disdain thee, but if ever
Thou see me clasp and kiss a man indeed,
I will again be thine, and not till then. [*Exit.*

LITTLE JOHN.

I have been a fool and I have lost my Kate. [*Exit.*

Re-enter ROBIN.

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ROBIN.

He dozes. I have left her watching him.
She will not marry till her father yield.
The old man dotes.
Nay—and she will not marry till Richard come,
And that's at latter Lammas—never perhaps.
Besides, tho' Friar Tuck might make us one,
An outlaw's bride may not be wife in law.
I am weary. [*Lying down on a bank.*
What's here? a dead bat in the fairy ring—
Yes, I remember, Scarlet hacking down
A hollow ash, a bat flew out at him
In the clear noon, and hook'd him by the hair,
And he was scared and slew it. My men say
The fairies haunt this glade;—if one could catch
A glimpse of them and of their fairy Queen—
Have our loud pastimes driven them all away?
I never saw them: yet I could believe
There came some evil fairy at my birth
And cursed me, as the last heir of my race:
'This boy will never wed the maid he loves,
Nor leave a child behind him' (*yawns*). Weary—
weary
As tho' a spell were on me (*he dreams*).

[*The whole stage lights up, and fairies are seen swinging on boughs and nestling in hollow trunks.*

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TITANIA *on a hill.* FAIRIES *on either side of her.*
The moon above the hill.

FIRST FAIRY.

Evil fairy! do you hear?
So he said who lieth here.

SECOND FAIRY.

We be fairies of the wood,
We be neither bad nor good.

FIRST FAIRY.

Back and side and hip and rib,
Nip, nip him for his fib.

TITANIA.

Nip him not, but let him snore.
We must flit for evermore.

FIRST FAIRY.

Tit, my queen, must it be so?
Wherefore, wherefore should we go?

TITANIA.

I Titania bid you flit,
And you dare to call me Tit.

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FIRST FAIRY.

Tit, for love and brevity,
Not for love of levity.

TITANIA.

Pertest of our flickering mob,
Wouldst thou call my Oberon Ob?

FIRST FAIRY.

Nay, an please your Elfin Grace,
Never Ob before his face.

TITANIA.

Fairy realm is breaking down
When the fairy slights the crown.

FIRST FAIRY.

No, by wisp and glowworm, no.
Only wherefore should we go?

TITANIA.

We must fly from Robin Hood
And this new queen of the wood.

FIRST FAIRY.

True, she is a goodly thing.
Jealousy, jealousy of the king.

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TITANIA.

Nay, for Oberon fled away
Twenty thousand leagues to-day.

CHORUS.

Look, there comes a deputation
From our finikin fairy nation.

Enter several FAIRIES.

THIRD FAIRY.

Crush'd my bat whereon I flew.
Found him dead and drench'd in dew,
Queen.

FOURTH FAIRY.

Quash'd my frog that used to quack
When I vaulted on his back,
Queen.

FIFTH FAIRY.

Kill'd the sward where'er they sat,
Queen.

SIXTH FAIRY.

Lusty bracken beaten flat,
Queen.

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SEVENTH FAIRY.

Honest daisy deadly bruised,
Queen.

EIGHTH FAIRY.

Modest maiden lily abused,
Queen.

NINTH FAIRY.

Beetle's jewel armour crack'd,
Queen.

TENTH FAIRY.

Reed I rock'd upon broken-back'd,
Queen.

FAIRIES (*in chorus*).

We be scared with song and shout.
Arrows whistle all about.
All our games be put to rout.
All our rings be trampled out.
Lead us thou to some deep glen,
Far from solid foot of men,
Never to return again,
Queen.

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TITANIA (*to* FIRST FAIRY).

Elf, with spiteful heart and eye,
Talk of jealousy? You see why
We must leave the wood and fly.

(To all the fairies who sing at intervals with TITANIA.)

Up with you, out of the forest and over the hills and away,
And over this Robin Hood's bay!
Up thro' the light of the seas by the moon's long-silvering ray!
To a land where the fay,
Not an eye to survey,
In the night, in the day,
Can have frolic and play.
Up with you, all of you, out of it! hear and obey.
Man, lying here alone,
Moody creature,
Of a nature
Stronger, sadder than my own,
Were I human, were I human,
I could love you like a woman.
Man, man,
You shall wed your Marian.
She is true, and you are true,

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And you love her and she loves you;
Both be happy, and adieu for ever and for evermore—
adieu.

ROBIN (*half waking*).

Shall I be happy? Happy vision, stay.

TITANIA.

Up with you, all of you, off with you, out of it, over the wood and away!

END OF ACT II.

Note.—In the stage copy of my play I have had this Fairy Scene transferred to the end of the Third Act, for the sake of modern dramatic effect.

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ACT III

THE CROWNING OF MARIAN

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ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Heart of the forest.*

MARIAN *and* KATE (*in Foresters' green*).

KATE.

What makes you seem so cold to Robin, lady?

MARIAN.

What makes thee think I seem so cold to Robin?

KATE.

You never whisper close as lovers do,
Nor care to leap into each other's arms.

MARIAN.

There is a fence I cannot overleap,
My father's will.

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KATE.

Then you will wed the Sheriff?

MARIAN.

When heaven falls, I may light on such a lark!
But who art thou to catechize me—thou
That hast not made it up with Little John!

KATE.

I wait till Little John makes up to *me*.

MARIAN.

Why, my good Robin fancied me a man,
And drew his sword upon me, and Little John
Fancied he saw thee clasp and kiss a man.

KATE.

Well, if *he* fancied that *I* fancy a man
Other than *him*, he is *not* the man for me.

MARIAN.

And that would quite *un*man him, heart and soul.
For both are thine.

(*Looking up.*)

But listen—overhead—

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Fluting, and piping and luting 'Love, love, love'—
Those sweet tree-Cupids half-way up in heaven,
The birds—would I were one of 'em! O good Kate—
If my man-Robin were but a bird-Robin,
How happily would we lilt among the leaves
'Love, love, love, love'—what merry madness—listen!
And let them warm thy heart to Little John.
Look where he comes!

KATE.

I will not meet him yet,
I'll watch him from behind the trees, but call
Kate when you will, for I am close at hand.

KATE *stands aside and enter* ROBIN, *and after him at a little distance* LITTLE JOHN, MUCH *the Miller's son, and* SCARLET *with an oaken chaplet, and other* FORESTERS.

LITTLE JOHN.

My lord—Robin—I crave pardon—you always seem to me my lord—I Little John, he Much the miller's son, and he Scarlet, honouring all womankind, and more especially my lady Marian, do here, in the name of all our woodmen, present her with this oaken chaplet as Queen of the wood, I Little John,

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he, young Scarlet, and he, old Much, and all the rest of us.

MUCH.

And I, old Much, say as much, for being every inch a man I honour every inch of a woman.

ROBIN.

Friend Scarlet, art thou less a man than Much?
Why art thou mute? Dost thou not honour woman?

SCARLET.

Robin, I do, but I have a bad wife.

ROBIN.

Then let her pass as an exception, Scarlet.

SCARLET.

So I would, Robin, if any man would accept her.

MARIAN (*puts on the chaplet*).

Had I a bulrush now in this right hand
For sceptre, I were like a queen indeed.
Comrades, I thank you for your loyalty,
And take and wear this symbol of your love;
And were my kindly father sound again,
Could live as happy as the larks in heaven,

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And join your feasts and all your forest games
As far as maiden might. Farewell, good fellows!

[*Exeunt several foresters, the others withdraw to the back.*

ROBIN.

Sit here by me, where the most beaten track
Runs thro' the forest, hundreds of huge oaks,
Gnarl'd—older than the thrones of Europe—look,
What breadth, height, strength—torrents of eddying bark!
Some hollow-hearted from exceeding age—
That never be thy lot or mine!—and some
Pillaring a leaf-sky on their monstrous boles,
Sound at the core as we are. Fifty leagues
Of woodland hear and know my horn, that scares
The Baron at the torture of his churls,
The pillage of his vassals.
O maiden-wife,
The oppression of our people moves me so,
That when I think of it hotly, Love himself
Seems but a ghost, but when thou feel'st with me
The ghost returns to Marian, clothes itself
In maiden flesh and blood, and looks at once
Maid Marian, and that maiden freedom which
Would never brook the tyrant. Live thou maiden!
Thou art more my wife so feeling, than if my wife

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And siding with these proud priests, and these Barons,
Devils, that make this blessed England hell.

MARIAN.

Earl——

ROBIN.

Nay, no Earl am I. I am English yeoman.

MARIAN.

Then *I* am yeo-woman. O the clumsy word!

ROBIN.

Take thou this light kiss for thy clumsy word.
Kiss me again.

MARIAN.

Robin, I will not kiss thee,
For that belongs to marriage; but I hold thee
The husband of my heart, the noblest light
That ever flash'd across my life, and I
Embrace thee with the kisses of the soul.

ROBIN.

I thank thee.

MARIAN.

Scarlet told me—is it true?—
That John last week return'd to Nottingham,
And all the foolish world is pressing thither.

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ROBIN.

Sit here, my queen, and judge the world with me.
Doubtless, like judges of another bench,
However wise, we must at times have wrought
Some great injustice, yet, far as we knew,
We never robb'd one friend of the true King.
We robb'd the traitors that are leagued with John;
We robb'd the lawyer who went against the law;
We spared the craftsman, chapman, all that live
By their own hands, the labourer, the poor priest;
We spoil'd the prior, friar, abbot, monk,
For playing upside down with Holy Writ.
'Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor;'
Take all they have and give it to thyself!
Then after we have eased them of their coins
It is our forest custom they should revel
Along with Robin.

MARIAN.

And if a woman pass——

ROBIN.

Dear, in these days of Norman license, when
Our English maidens are their prey, if ever
A Norman damsel fell into our hands,
In this dark wood when all was in our power
We never wrong'd a woman.

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MARIAN.

Noble Robin.

LITTLE JOHN (*coming forward*).

Here come three beggars.

Enter the three BEGGARS.

LITTLE JOHN.

Toll!

FIRST BEGGAR.

Eh! we be beggars, we come to ask o' you. We ha' nothing.

SECOND BEGGAR.

Rags, nothing but our rags.

THIRD BEGGAR.

I have but one penny in pouch, and so you would make it two I should be grateful.

MARIAN.

Beggars, you are sturdy rogues that should be set to work. You are those that tramp the country, filch the linen from the hawthorn, poison the house-dog,

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and scare lonely maidens at the farmstead. Search them, Little John.

LITTLE JOHN.

These two have forty gold marks between them, Robin.

ROBIN.

Cast them into our treasury, the beggars' mites. Part shall go to the almshouses at Nottingham, part to the shrine of our Lady. Search this other.

LITTLE JOHN.

He hath, as he said, but one penny.

ROBIN.

Leave it with him and add a gold mark thereto. He hath spoken truth in a world of lies.

THIRD BEGGAR.

I thank you, my lord.

LITTLE JOHN.

A fine, a fine! he hath called plain Robin a lord. How much for a beggar?

ROBIN.

Take his penny and leave him his gold mark.

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LITTLE JOHN.

Sit there, knaves, till the captain call for you.

[*They pass behind the trunk of an oak on the right.*

MARIAN.

Art thou not hard upon them, my good Robin?

ROBIN.

They might be harder upon thee, if met in a black lane at midnight: the throat might gape before the tongue could cry who?

LITTLE JOHN.

Here comes a citizen, and I think his wife.

Enter CITIZEN *and* WIFE.

CITIZEN.

That business which we have in Nottingham——

LITTLE JOHN.

Halt!

CITIZEN.

O dear wife, we have fallen into the hands
Of Robin Hood.

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MARIAN.

And Robin Hood hath sworn—
Shame on thee, Little John, thou hast forgotten—
That by the blessed Mother no man, so
His own true wife came with him, should be stay'd
From passing onward. Fare you well, fair lady!

[*Bowing to her.*

ROBIN.

And may your business thrive in Nottingham!

CITIZEN.

I thank you, noble sir, the very blossom
Of bandits. Courtesy to him, wife, and thank him.

WIFE.

I thank you, noble sir, and will pray for you
That *you* may thrive, but in some kindlier trade.

CITIZEN.

Away, away, wife, wilt thou anger him?

[*Exeunt* CITIZEN *and his* WIFE.

LITTLE JOHN.

Here come three friars.

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ROBIN.

Marian, thou and thy woman (*looking round*),
Why, where is Kate?

MARIAN (*calling*).

Kate!

KATE.

Here!

ROBIN.

Thou and thy woman are a match for three friars. Take thou my bow and arrow and compel them to pay toll.

MARIAN.

Toll!

Enter three FRIARS.

FIRST FRIAR (*advancing*).

Behold a pretty Dian of the wood,
Prettier than that same widow which you wot of.
Ha, brother. Toll, my dear? the toll of love.

MARIAN (*drawing bow*).

Back! how much money hast thou in thy purse?

FIRST FRIAR.

Thou art playing with us. How should poor friars have money?

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MARIAN.

How much? how much? Speak, or the arrow flies.

FIRST FRIAR.

How much? well, now I bethink me, I have one mark in gold which a pious son of the Church gave me this morning on my setting forth.

MARIAN (*bending bow at the second*).

And thou?

SECOND FRIAR.

Well, as he said, one mark in gold.

MARIAN (*bending bow at the third*).

And thou?

THIRD FRIAR.

One mark in gold.

MARIAN.

Search them, Kate, and see if they have spoken truth.

KATE.

They are all mark'd men. They have told but a tenth of the truth: they have each ten marks in gold.

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MARIAN.

Leave them each what they say is theirs, and take the twenty-seven marks to the captain's treasury. Sit there till you be called for.

FIRST FRIAR.

We have fall'n into the hands of Robin Hood.

[MARIAN *and* KATE *return to* ROBIN.

[*The* FRIARS *pass behind an oak on the left.*

ROBIN.

Honour to thee, brave Marian, and thy Kate.
I know them arrant knaves in Nottingham.
One half of this shall go to those they have wrong'd,
One half shall pass into our treasury.
Where lies that cask of wine whereof we plunder'd
The Norman prelate ?

LITTLE JOHN.

In that oak, where twelve
Can stand upright, nor touch each other.

ROBIN.

Good !
Roll it in here. These friars, thieves, and liars,
Shall drink the health of our new woodland Queen.

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And they shall pledge thee, Marian, loud enough
To fright the wild swan passing overhead,
The mouldwarp underfoot.

MARIAN.

They pledge me, Robin?
The silent blessing of one honest man
Is heard in heaven—the wassail yells of thief
And rogue and liar echo down in Hell,
And wake the Devil, and I may sicken by 'em.
Well, well, be it so, thou strongest thief of all,
For thou hast stolen my will, and made it thine.

FRIAR TUCK, LITTLE JOHN, MUCH,
and SCARLET *roll in cask.*

FRIAR TUCK.

I marvel is it sack or Malvoisie?

ROBIN.

Do me the service to tap it, and thou wilt know.

FRIAR TUCK.

I would tap myself in thy service, Robin.

ROBIN.

And thou wouldst run more wine than blood.

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FRIAR TUCK.

And both at thy service, Robin.

ROBIN.

I believe thee, thou art a good fellow, though a friar. [*They pour the wine into cups.*

FRIAR TUCK.

Fill to the brim. Our Robin, King o' the woods,
Wherever the horn sound, and the buck bound,
Robin, the people's friend, the King o' the woods.
[*They drink.*

ROBIN.

To the brim and over till the green earth drink
Her health along with us in this rich draught,
And answer it in flowers. The Queen o' the woods,
Wherever the buck bound, and the horn sound,
Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods! [*They drink.*

Here, you three rogues,
[*To the* BEGGARS. *They come out.*
You caught a lonely woodman of our band,
And bruised him almost to the death, and took
His monies.

THIRD BEGGAR.

Captain, nay, it wasn't me.

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ROBIN.

You ought to dangle up there among the crows.
Drink to the health of our new Queen o' the woods,
Or else be bound and beaten.

FIRST BEGGAR.

Sir, sir—well,
We drink the health of thy new Queen o' the woods.

ROBIN.

Louder! louder! Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods!

BEGGARS (*shouting*).

Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods: Queen o' the woods.

FIRST *and* SECOND BEGGARS (*aside*).

The black fiend grip her!

[*They drink.*

ROBIN (*to the* FRIARS).

And you three holy men,

[*They come out.*

You worshippers of the Virgin, one of you
Shamed a too trustful widow whom you heard
In her confession; and another—worse!—
An innocent maid. Drink to the Queen o' the woods,
Or else be bound and beaten.

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FIRST FRIAR.

Robin Hood,
These be the lies the people tell of us,
Because we seek to curb their viciousness.
However—to this maid, this Queen o' the woods.

ROBIN.

Louder, louder, ye knaves. Maid Marian!
Queen o' the woods!

FRIARS (*shouting*).

Maid Marian, Queen o' the woods.

FIRST FRIAR (*aside*).

Maid?

SECOND FRIAR (*aside*).

Paramour!

THIRD FRIAR (*aside*).

Hell take her!

[*They drink.*

FRIAR TUCK.

Robin, will you not hear one of these beggars' catches? They can do it. I have heard 'em in the market at Mansfield.

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LITTLE JOHN.

No, my lord, hear ours—Robin—I crave pardon, I always think of you as my lord, but I may still say my lady; and, my lady, Kate and I have fallen out again, and I pray you to come between us again, for, my lady, we have made a song in your honour, so your ladyship care to listen.

ROBIN.

Sing, and by St. Mary these beggars and these friars shall join you. Play the air, Little John.

LITTLE JOHN.

Air and word, my lady, are maid and man. Join them and they are a true marriage; and so, I pray you, my lady, come between me and my Kate and make us one again. Scarlet, begin.

[*Playing the air on his viol.*

SCARLET.

By all the deer that spring
Thro' wood and lawn and ling,
When all the leaves are green;
By arrow and gray goosewing,
When horn and echo ring,
We care so much for a King;
We care not much for a Queen—
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

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MARIAN.

Do you call that in my honour?

SCARLET.

Bitters before dinner, my lady, to give you a relish. The first part—made before you came among us—they put it upon me because I have a bad wife. I love you all the same. Proceed. [*All the rest sing.*

By all the leaves of spring,
And all the birds that sing
When all the leaves are green;
By arrow and by bowstring,
We care so much for a King
That we would die for a Queen—
For a Queen, for a Queen o' the woods.

Enter FORESTER.

FORESTER.

Black news, black news from Nottingham! I grieve
I am the Raven who croaks it. My lord John,
In wrath because you drove him from the forest,
Is coming with a swarm of mercenaries
To break our band and scatter us to the winds.

MARIAN.

O Robin, Robin! See that men be set
Along the glades and passes of the wood

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To warn us of his coming! then each man
That owns a wife or daughter, let him bury her
Even in the bowels of the earth to scape
The glance of John——

ROBIN.

You hear your Queen, obey!

END OF ACT III

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ACT IV

THE CONCLUSION

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ACT IV

SCENE.—*A forest bower, cavern in background. Sunrise.*

MARIAN (*rising to meet Robin*).

Robin, the sweet light of a mother's eye,
That beam of dawn upon the opening flower,
Has never glanced upon me when a child.
He was my father, mother, both in one.
The love that children owe to both I give
To him alone.

(ROBIN *offers to caress her.*)

MARIAN.

Quiet, good Robin, quiet!
You lovers are such clumsy summer-flies
For ever buzzing at your lady's face.

ROBIN.

Bees rather, flying to the flower for honey.

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MARIAN (*sings*).

The bee buzz'd up in the heat.
'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'
The flower said 'Take it, my dear,
For now is the spring of the year.
So come, come!'
'Hum!'
And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold
When the flower was wither'd and old.
'Have you still any honey, my dear?'
She said 'It's the fall of the year,
But come, come!'
'Hum!'
And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

ROBIN.

Out on thy song!

MARIAN.

Did I not sing it in tune?

ROBIN.

No, sweetheart! out of tune with Love and me.

MARIAN.

And yet in tune with Nature and the bees.

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ROBIN.

Out on it, I say, as out of tune and time!

MARIAN.

Till thou thyself shalt come to sing it—in time.

ROBIN (*taking a tress of her hair in his hand*).

Time! if his backward-working alchemy
Should change this gold to silver, why, the silver
Were dear as gold, the wrinkle as the dimple.
Thy bee should buzz about the Court of John.
No ribald John is Love, no wanton Prince,
The ruler of an hour, but lawful King,
Whose writ will run thro' all the range of life.
Out upon all hard-hearted maidenhood!

MARIAN.

And out upon all simple batchelors!
Ah, well! thou seest the land has come between us,
And my sick father here has come between us,
And this rich Sheriff too has come between us;
So, is it not all over now between us?
Gone, like a deer that hath escaped thine arrow!

ROBIN.

What deer when I have mark'd him ever yet
Escaped mine arrow? over is it? wilt thou
Give me thy hand on that?

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MARIAN.

Take it.

ROBIN (*kisses her hand*).

The Sheriff!
This ring cries out against thee. Say it again,
And by this ring the lips that never breathed
Love's falsehood to true maid will seal Love's truth
On those sweet lips that dare to dally with it.

MARIAN.

Quiet, quiet! or I will to my father.

ROBIN.

So, then, thy father will not grace our feast
With his white beard to-day.

MARIAN.

Being so sick
How should he, Robin?

ROBIN.

Then that bond he hath
Of the Abbot—wilt thou ask him for it?

MARIAN.

Why?

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ROBIN.

I have sent to the Abbot and justiciary
To bring their counter-bond into the forest.

MARIAN.

But will they come?

ROBIN.

If not I have let them know
Their lives unsafe in any of these our woods,
And in the winter I will fire their farms.
But I have sworn by our Lady if they come
I will not tear the bond, but see fair play
Betwixt them and Sir Richard—promised too,
So that they deal with us like honest men,
They shall be handled with all courteousness.

MARIAN.

What wilt thou do with the bond then?

ROBIN.

Wait and see.
What wilt thou do with the Sheriff?

MARIAN.

Wait and see.
I bring the bond. [*Exit* MARIAN.

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Enter LITTLE JOHN, FRIAR TUCK, *and* MUCH, *and* FORESTERS *and* PEASANTS *laughing and talking.*

ROBIN.

Have you glanced down thro' all the forest ways
And mark'd if those two knaves from York be coming?

LITTLE JOHN.

Not yet, but here comes one of bigger mould.

Enter KING RICHARD.

Art thou a knight?

KING RICHARD.

I am.

ROBIN.

And walkest here
Unarmour'd? all these walks are Robin Hood's
And sometimes perilous.

KING RICHARD.

Good! but having lived
For twenty days and nights in mail, at last
I crawl'd like a sick crab from my old shell,
That I might breathe for a moment free of shield
And cuirass in this forest where I dream'd

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That all was peace—not even a Robin Hood—
(*Aside*) What if these knaves should know me for their King?

ROBIN.

Art thou for Richard, or allied to John?

KING RICHARD.

I *am* allied to John.

ROBIN.

The worse for thee.

KING RICHARD.

Art thou that banish'd lord of Huntingdon,
The chief of these outlaws who break the law?

ROBIN.

I am the yeoman, plain Robin Hood, and being out of the law how should we break the law? if we broke into it again we should break the law, and then we were no longer outlaws.

KING RICHARD.

But, Earl, if thou be he——

FRIAR TUCK.

Fine him! fine him! he hath called plain Robin an earl. How much is it, Robin, for a knight?

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ROBIN.

A mark.

KING RICHARD (*gives it*).

There.

ROBIN.

Thou payest easily, like a good fellow,
But being o' John's side we must have thy gold.

KING RICHARD.

But I am more for Richard than for John.

ROBIN.

What, what, a truckler! a word-eating coward!
Nay, search him then. How much hast thou about thee?

KING RICHARD.

I had one mark.

ROBIN.

What more?

KING RICHARD.

No more, I think.
But how then if I will not bide to be search'd?

ROBIN.

We are four to one.

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KING RICHARD.

And I might deal with four.

ROBIN.

Good, good, I love thee for that! but if I wind
This forest-horn of mine I can bring down
Fourscore tall fellows on thee.

KING RICHARD.

Search me then.
I should be hard beset with thy fourscore.

LITTLE JOHN (*searching* KING RICHARD).

Robin, he hath no more. He hath spoken truth.

ROBIN.

I am glad of it. Give him back his gold again.

KING RICHARD.

But I had liefer than this gold again—
Not having broken fast the livelong day—
Something to eat.

ROBIN.

And thou shalt have it, man.
Our feast is yonder, spread beneath an oak,

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Venison, and wild boar, wild goose, besides
Hedge-pigs, a savoury viand, so thou be
Squeamish at eating the King's venison.

KING RICHARD.

Nay, Robin, I am like thyself in that
I look on the King's venison as my own.

FRIAR TUCK.

Ay, ay, Robin, but let him know our forest laws: he that pays not for his dinner must fight for it. In the sweat of thy brow, says Holy Writ, shalt thou eat bread, but in the sweat of thy brow and thy breast, and thine arms, and thy legs, and thy heart, and thy liver, and in the fear of thy life shalt thou eat the King's venison—ay, and so thou fight at quarterstaff for thy dinner with our Robin, that will give thee a new zest for it, though thou wert like a bottle full up to the cork, or as hollow as a kex, or the shambles-oak, or a weasel-sucked egg, or the head of a fool, or the heart of Prince John, or any other symbol of vacuity.

[*They bring out the quarterstaffs, and the foresters and peasants crowd round to see the games, and applaud at intervals.*

KING RICHARD.

Great woodland king, I know not quarterstaff.

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LITTLE JOHN.

A fine! a fine! He hath called plain Robin a king.

ROBIN.

A shadow, a poetical fiction—did ye not call me king in your song?—a mere figure. Let it go by.

FRIAR TUCK.

No figure, no fiction, Robin. What, is not man a hunting animal? And look you now, if we kill a stag, our dogs have their paws cut off, and the hunters, if caught, are blinded, or worse than blinded. Is that to be a king? If the king and the law work injustice, is not he that goes against the king and the law the true king in the sight of the King of kings? Thou art the king of the forest, and I would thou wert the king of the land.

KING RICHARD.

This friar is of much boldness, noble captain.

ROBIN.

He hath got it from the bottle, noble knight.

FRIAR TUCK.

Boldness out of the bottle! I defy thee.
Boldness is in the blood, Truth in the bottle.

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She lay so long at the bottom of her well
In the cold water that she lost her voice,
And so she glided up into the heart
O' the bottle, the warm wine, and found it again.
In vino veritas. Shall I undertake
The knight at quarterstaff, or thou?

ROBIN.

Peace, magpie!
Give him the quarterstaff. Nay, but thyself
Shalt play a bout with me, that he may see
The fashion of it.

[*Plays with* LITTLE JOHN *at quarterstaff.*

KING RICHARD.

Well, then, let me try. [*They play.*
I yield, I yield. I know no quarterstaff.

ROBIN.

Then thou shalt play the game of buffets with us.

KING RICHARD.

What's that?

ROBIN.

I stand up here, thou there. I give thee
A buffet, and thou me. The Holy Virgin

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Stand by the strongest. I am overbreathed,
Friar, by my two bouts at quarterstaff.
Take him and try him, friar.

FRIAR TUCK.

There! [*Strikes.*

KING RICHARD (*strikes*).

There! [FRIAR *falls.*

FRIAR TUCK.

There!
Thou hast roll'd over the Church militant
Like a tod of wool from wagon into warehouse.
Nay, I defy thee still. Try me an hour hence.
I am misty with my thimbleful of ale.

ROBIN.

Thou seest, Sir Knight, our friar is so holy
That he's a miracle-monger, and can make
Five quarts pass into a thimble. Up, good Much.

FRIAR TUCK.

And show thyself more of a man than me.

MUCH.

Well, no man yet has ever bowl'd me down.

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SCARLET.

Ay, for old Much is every inch a man.

ROBIN.

We should be all the more beholden to him.

MUCH.

Much and more! much and more! I am the oldest of thy men, and thou and thy youngsters are always muching and moreing me.

ROBIN.

Because thou art always so much more of a man than my youngsters, old Much.

MUCH.

Well, we Muches be old.

ROBIN.

Old as the hills.

MUCH.

Old as the mill. We had it i' the Red King's time, and so I *may* be more of a man than to be bowled over like a ninepin. There! [*Strikes.*

KING RICHARD.

There! [MUCH *falls.*

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ROBIN.

'Much would have more,' says the proverb; but Much hath had more than enough. Give me thy hand, Much; I love thee (*lifts him up*). At him, Scarlet!

SCARLET.

I cannot cope with him: my wrist is strain'd.

KING RICHARD.

Try, thyself, valorous Robin!

ROBIN.

I am mortally afear'd o' thee, thou big man,
But seeing valour is one against all odds,
There!

KING RICHARD.

There! [ROBIN *falls back, and is caught in the arms of* LITTLE JOHN.

ROBIN.

Good, now I love thee mightily, thou tall fellow.
Break thine alliance with this faithless John,
And live with us and the birds in the green wood.

KING RICHARD.

I cannot break it, Robin, if I wish'd.
Still I am more for Richard than for John.

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LITTLE JOHN.

Look, Robin, at the far end of the glade
I see two figures crawling up the hill.

[*Distant sound of trumpets.*

ROBIN.

The Abbot of York and his justiciary.

KING RICHARD (*aside*).

They know me. I must not as yet be known.
Friends, your free sports have swallow'd my free hour.
Farewell at once, for I must hence upon
The King's affair.

ROBIN.

Not taste his venison first?

FRIAR TUCK.

Hast thou not fought for it, and earn'd it? Stay,
Dine with my brethren here, and on thine own.

KING RICHARD.

And which be they?

FRIAR TUCK.

Wild geese, for how canst thou be thus allied
With John, and serve King Richard save thou be

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A traitor or a goose? but stay with Robin;
For Robin is no scatterbrains like Richard,
Robin's a wise man, Richard a wiseacre,
Robin's an outlaw, but he helps the poor.
While Richard hath outlaw'd himself, and helps
Nor rich, nor poor. Richard's the king of courtesy,
For if he did me the good grace to kick me
I could but sneak and smile and call it courtesy,
For he's a king.
And that is only courtesy *by* courtesy—
But Robin is a thief of courtesy
Whom they that suffer by him call the blossom
Of bandits. There—to be a thief of courtesy—
There is a trade of genius, there's glory!
Again, this Richard sacks and wastes a town
With random pillage, but our Robin takes
From whom he knows are hypocrites and liars.
Again this Richard risks his life for a straw,
So lies in prison—while our Robin's life
Hangs by a thread, but he is a free man.
Richard, again, is king over a realm
He hardly knows, and Robin king of Sherwood,
And loves and doats on every dingle of it.
Again this Richard is the lion of Cyprus,
Robin, the lion of Sherwood—may this mouth
Never suck grape again, if our true Robin
Be not the nobler lion of the twain.

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KING RICHARD.

Gramercy for thy preachment! if the land
Were ruleable by tongue, thou shouldst be king.
And yet thou know'st how little of thy king!
What was this realm of England, all the crowns
Of all this world, to Richard when he flung
His life, heart, soul into those holy wars
That sought to free the tomb-place of the King
Of all the world? thou, that art churchman too
In a fashion, and shouldst feel with him. Farewell!
I left mine horse and armour with a Squire,
And I must see to 'em.

ROBIN.

When wilt thou return?

KING RICHARD.

Return, I? when? when Richard will return.

ROBIN.

No sooner? when will that be? canst thou tell?
But I have ta'en a sudden fancy to thee.
Accept this horn! if e'er thou be assail'd
In any of our forests, blow upon it
Three mots, this fashion—listen! (*blows*) Canst thou
do it? [KING RICHARD *blows*.
Blown like a true son of the woods. Farewell!
[*Exit* KING RICHARD.

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Enter ABBOT *and* JUSTICIARY.

FRIAR TUCK.

Church and Law, halt and pay toll!

JUSTICIARY.

Rogue, we have thy captain's safe-conduct; though he be the chief of rogues, he hath never broken his word.

ABBOT.

There is our bond.

[*Gives it to* ROBIN.

ROBIN.

I thank thee.

JUSTICIARY.

Ay, but where,
Where is this old Sir Richard of the Lea?
Thou told'st us we should meet him in the forest,
Where he would pay us down his thousand marks.

ROBIN.

Give him another month, and he will pay it.

JUSTICIARY.

We cannot give a month.

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ROBIN.

Why then a week.

JUSTICIARY.

No, not an hour: the debt is due to-day.

ABBOT.

Where is this laggard Richard of the Lea?

ROBIN.

He hath been hurt, was growing whole again,
Only this morning in his agony
Lest he should fail to pay these thousand marks
He is stricken with a slight paralysis.
Have you no pity? must you see the man?

JUSTICIARY.

Ay, ay, what else? how else can this be settled?

ROBIN.

Go men, and fetch him hither on the litter.

[SIR RICHARD LEA *is brought in.*
MARIAN *comes with him.*

MARIAN.

Here is my father's bond. [*Gives it to* ROBIN HOOD.

ROBIN.

I thank thee, dear.

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JUSTICIARY.

Sir Richard, it was agreed when you borrowed these monies from the Abbot that if they were not repaid within a limited time your land should be forfeit.

SIR RICHARD.

The land! the land.

MARIAN.

You see he is past himself.
What would you more?

ABBOT.

What more? one thousand marks,
Or else the land.
You hide this damsel in your forest here,
[*Pointing to* MARIAN.
You hope to hold and keep her for yourself,
You heed not how you soil her maiden fame,
You scheme against her father's weal and hers,
For so this maid would wed our brother, he
Would pay us all the debt at once, and thus
This old Sir Richard might redeem his land.
He is all for love, he cares not for the land.

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SIR RICHARD.

The land, the land!

ROBIN (*giving two bags to the* ABBOT).

Here be one thousand marks
Out of our treasury to redeem the land.
[*Pointing to each of the bags.*
Half here, half there. [*Plaudits from his band.*

JUSTICIARY.

Ay, ay, but there is use, four hundred marks.

ROBIN (*giving a bag to* JUSTICIARY).

There then, four hundred marks. [*Plaudits.*

JUSTICIARY.

What did I say?
Nay, my tongue tript—five hundred marks for use.

ROBIN (*giving another bag to him*).

A hundred more? There then, a hundred more.
[*Plaudits.*

JUSTICIARY.

Ay, ay, but you see the bond and the letter of the law. It is stated there that these monies should be paid in to the Abbot at York, at the end of the month at noon, and they are delivered here in the wild wood an hour after noon.

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MARIAN.

The letter—O how often justice drowns
Between the law and letter of the law!
O God, I would the letter of the law
Were some strong fellow here in the wild wood,
That thou might'st beat him down at quarterstaff!
Have you no pity?

JUSTICIARY.

You run down your game,
We ours. What pity have you for your game?

ROBIN.

We needs must live. Our bowmen are so true
They strike the deer at once to death—he falls
And knows no more.

MARIAN.

Pity, pity!—There was a man of ours
Up in the north, a goodly fellow too,
He met a stag there on so narrow a ledge—
A precipice above, and one below—
There was no room to advance or to retire.
The man lay down—the delicate-footed creature
Came stepping o'er him, so as not to harm him—
The hunter's passion flash'd into the man,
He drove his knife into the heart of the deer,
The deer fell dead to the bottom, and the man

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Fell with him, and was crippled ever after.
I fear I had small pity for that man.—
You have the monies and the use of them.
What would you more?

JUSTICIARY.

What? must we dance attendance all the day?

ROBIN.

Dance! ay, by all the saints and all the devils ye shall dance. When the Church and the law have forgotten God's music, they shall dance to the music of the wild wood. Let the birds sing, and do you dance to their song. What, you will not? Strike up our music, Little John. (*He plays.*) They will not! Prick 'em in the calves with the arrow-points—prick 'em in the calves.

ABBOT.

Rogue, I am full of gout. I cannot dance.

ROBIN.

And Sir Richard cannot redeem his land. Sweat out your gout, friend, for by my life, you shall dance till he can. Prick him in the calves!

JUSTICIARY.

Rogue, I have a swollen vein in my right leg, and if thou prick me there I shall die.

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ROBIN.

Prick him where thou wilt, so that he dance.

ABBOT.

Rogue, we come not alone.

JUSTICIARY.

Not the right.

ABBOT.

We told the Prince and the Sheriff of our coming.

JUSTICIARY.

Take the left leg for the love of God.

ABBOT.

They follow us.

JUSTICIARY.

You will all of you hang.

ROBIN.

Let us hang, so thou dance meanwhile; or by that same love of God we will hang *thee*, prince or no prince, sheriff or no sheriff.

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JUSTICIARY.

Take care, take care! I dance—I will dance—I dance. [ABBOT *and* JUSTICIARY *dance to music, each holding a bag in each hand.*

Enter SCARLET.

SCARLET.

The Sheriff! the Sheriff, follow'd by Prince John
And all his mercenaries! We sighted 'em
Only this moment. By St. Nicholas
They must have sprung like Ghosts from underground,
Or, like the Devils they are, straight up from Hell.

ROBIN.

Crouch all into the bush!

[*The foresters and peasants hide behind the bushes.*

MARIAN.

Take up the litter!

SIR RICHARD.

Move me no more! I am sick and faint with pain!

MARIAN.

But, Sir, the Sheriff——

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SIR RICHARD.

Let me be, I say!
The Sheriff will be welcome! let me be!

MARIAN.

Give me my bow and arrows. I remain
Beside my Father's litter.

ROBIN.

And fear not thou!
Each of us has an arrow on the cord;
We all keep watch.

Enter SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM.

SHERIFF.

Marian!

MARIAN.

Speak not. I wait upon a dying father.

SHERIFF.

The debt hath not been paid. She will be mine.
What are you capering for? By old St. Vitus
Have you gone mad? Has it been paid?

ABBOT (*dancing*).

O yes.

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SHERIFF.

Have I lost her then?

JUSTICIARY (*dancing*).

Lost her? O no, we took
Advantage of the letter—O Lord, the vein!
Not paid at York—the wood—prick me no more!

SHERIFF.

What pricks thee save it be thy conscience, man?

JUSTICIARY.

By my halidome I felt him at my leg still. Where be they gone to?

SHERIFF.

Thou art alone in the silence of the forest
Save for this maiden and thy brother Abbot,
And this old crazeling in the litter there.

Enter on one side FRIAR TUCK *from the bush, and on the other* PRINCE JOHN *and his* SPEARMEN, *with banners and trumpets, etc.*

JUSTICIARY (*examining his leg*).

They have missed the vein.

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ABBOT.

And we shall keep the land.

SHERIFF.

Sweet Marian, by the letter of the law
It seems thy father's land is forfeited.

SIR RICHARD.

No! let me out of the litter. He shall wed thee:
The land shall still be mine. Child, thou shalt wed
him,
Or thine old father will go mad—he will,
He will—he feels it in his head.

MARIAN.

O peace!
Father, I cannot marry till Richard comes.

SIR RICHARD.

And then the Sheriff!

MARIAN.

Ay, the Sheriff, father,
Would buy me for a thousand marks in gold—
Sell me again perchance for twice as much.
A woman's heart is but a little thing,
Much lighter than a thousand marks in gold;

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But pity for a father, it may be,
Is weightier than a thousand marks in gold.
I cannot love the Sheriff.

SIR RICHARD.

But thou wilt wed him?

MARIAN.

Ay, save King Richard, when he comes, forbid me.
Sweet heavens, I could wish that all the land
Were plunged beneath the waters of the sea,
Tho' all the world should go about in boats.

FRIAR TUCK.

Why, so should all the love-sick be sea-sick.

MARIAN.

Better than heart-sick, friar.

PRINCE JOHN (*to* SHERIFF).

See you not
They are jesting at us yonder, mocking us?
Carry her off, and let the old man die.

[*Advancing to* MARIAN.

Come, girl, thou shalt along with us on the instant.

FRIAR TUCK (*brandishing his staff*).

Then on the instant I will break thy head.

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SHERIFF.

Back, thou fool-friar! Knowest thou not the Prince?

FRIAR TUCK (*muttering*).

He may be prince; he is not gentleman.

PRINCE JOHN.

Look! I will take the rope from off thy waist
And twist it round thy neck and hang thee by it.
Seize him and truss him up, and carry her of.

[FRIAR TUCK *slips into the bush.*

MARIAN (*drawing the bow*).

No nearer to me! back! My hand is firm,
Mine eye most true to one hair's-breadth of aim.
You, Prince, our king to come—you that dishonour
The daughters and the wives of your own faction—
Who hunger for the body, not the soul—
This gallant Prince would have me of his—what?
Household? or shall I call it by that new term
Brought from the sacred East, his harem? Never,
Tho' you should queen me over all the realms
Held by King Richard, could I stoop so low
As mate with one that holds no love is pure,
No friendship sacred, values neither man
Nor woman save as tools—God help the mark—
To his own unprincely ends. And you, you, Sheriff,

[*Turning to the* SHERIFF.

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Who thought to buy your marrying me with gold,
Marriage is of the soul, not of the body.
Win me you cannot, murder me you may,
And all I love, Robin, and all his men,
For I am one with him and his; but while
I breathe Heaven's air, and Heaven looks down on me,
And smiles at my best meanings, I remain
Mistress of mine own self and mine own soul.
[*Retreating, with bow drawn, to the bush.*
Robin!

ROBIN.

I am here, my arrow on the cord.
He dies who dares to touch thee.

PRINCE JOHN.

Advance, advance!
What, daunted by a garrulous, arrogant girl!
Seize her and carry her off into my castle.

SHERIFF.

Thy castle!

PRINCE JOHN.

Said I not, I loved thee, man?
Risk not the love I bear thee for a girl.

SHERIFF.

Thy castle!

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PRINCE JOHN.

See thou thwart me not, thou fool!
When Richard comes he is soft enough to pardon
His brother; but all those that held with him,
Except I plead for them, will hang as high
As Haman.

SHERIFF.

She is mine. I have thy promise.

PRINCE JOHN.

O ay, she shall be thine—first mine, then thine,
For she shall spend her honeymoon with me.

SHERIFF.

Woe to that land shall own thee for her king!

PRINCE JOHN.

Advance, advance!

[*They advance shouting. The* KING *in armour reappears from the wood.*

KING RICHARD.

What shouts are these that ring along the wood?

FRIAR TUCK (*coming forward*).

Hail, knight, and help us. Here is one would clutch
Our pretty Marian for his paramour,
This other, willy-nilly, for his bride.

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KING RICHARD.

Damsel, is this the truth?

MARIAN.

Ay, noble knight.

FRIAR TUCK.

Ay, and she will not marry till Richard come.

KING RICHARD (*raising his vizor*).

I am here, and I am he.

PRINCE JOHN (*lowering his, and whispering to his men*).

It is not he—his face—tho' very like—
No, no! we have certain news he died in prison.
Make at him, all of you, a traitor coming
In Richard's name—it is not he—not he.

[*The men stand amazed.*

FRIAR TUCK (*going back to the bush*).

Robin, shall we not move?

ROBIN.

It is the King
Who bears all down. Let him alone awhile.
He loves the chivalry of his single arm.
Wait till he blow the horn.

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FRIAR TUCK (*coming back*).

If thou be king,
Be not a fool! Why blowest thou not the horn?

KING RICHARD.

I that have turn'd their Moslem crescent pale—
I blow the horn against this rascal rout!

[FRIAR TUCK *plucks the horn from him and blows.*
RICHARD *dashes alone against the* SHERIFF *and*
JOHN'S *men, and is almost borne down, when*
ROBIN *and his men rush in and rescue him.*

KING RICHARD (*to* ROBIN HOOD).

Thou hast saved my head at the peril of thine own.

PRINCE JOHN.

A horse! a horse! I must away at once;
I cannot meet his eyes. I go to Nottingham.
Sheriff, thou wilt find me at Nottingham. [*Exit.*

SHERIFF.

If anywhere, I shall find thee in hell.
What! go to slay his brother, and make *me*
The monkey that should roast his chestnuts for him!

KING RICHARD.

I fear to ask who left us even now.

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ROBIN.

I grieve to say it was thy father's son.
Shall I not after him and bring him back?

KING RICHARD.

No, let him be. Sheriff of Nottingham,

[SHERIFF *kneels.*

I have been away from England all these years,
Heading the holy war against the Moslem,
While thou and others in our kingless realms
Were fighting underhand unholy wars
Against your lawful king.

SHERIFF.

My liege, Prince John—

KING RICHARD.

Say thou no word against my brother John.

SHERIFF.

Why then, my liege, I have no word to say.

KING RICHARD (*to* ROBIN).

My good friend Robin, Earl of Huntingdon,
For Earl thou art again, hast thou no fetters
For those of thine own band who would betray thee?

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ROBIN.

I have; but these were never worn as yet.
I never found one traitor in my band.

KING RICHARD.

Thou art happier than thy king. Put him in chains.
[*They fetter the* SHERIFF.

ROBIN.

Look o'er these bonds, my liege.
[*Shows the* KING *the bonds. They talk together.*

KING RICHARD.

You, my lord Abbot, you Justiciary,
[*The* ABBOT *and* JUSTICIARY *kneel.*
I made you Abbot, you Justiciary:
You both are utter traitors to your king.

JUSTICIARY.

O my good liege, we did believe you dead.

ROBIN.

Was justice dead because the King was dead?
Sir Richard paid his monies to the Abbot.
You crost him with a quibble of your law.

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KING RICHARD.

But on the faith and honour of a king
The land is his again.

SIR RICHARD.

The land! the land!
I am crazed no longer, so I have the land.
[*Comes out of the litter and kneels.*
God save the King!

KING RICHARD (*raising* SIR RICHARD).

I thank thee, good Sir Richard.
Maid Marian.

MARIAN.

Yes, King Richard.

KING RICHARD.

Thou wouldst marry
This Sheriff when King Richard came again
Except—

MARIAN.

The King forbad it. True, my liege.

KING RICHARD.

How if the King command it?

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MARIAN.

Then, my liege,
If you would marry me with a traitor sheriff,
I fear I might prove traitor with the sheriff.

KING RICHARD.

But if the King forbid thy marrying
With Robin, our good Earl of Huntingdon.

MARIAN.

Then will I live for ever in the wild wood.

ROBIN (*coming forward*).

And I with thee.

KING RICHARD.

On nuts and acorns, ha!
Or the King's deer? Earl, thou when we were hence
Hast broken all our Norman forest-laws,
And scruplest not to flaunt it to our face
That thou wilt break our forest laws again
When we are here. Thou art overbold.

ROBIN.

My king,
I am but the echo of the lips of love.

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KING RICHARD.

Thou hast risk'd thy life for mine: bind these two men.

[*They take the bags from the* ABBOT *and* JUSTICIARY, *and proceed to fetter them.*

JUSTICIARY.

But will the King, then, judge us all unheard?
I can defend my cause against the traitors
Who fain would make me traitor. If the King
Condemn us without trial, men will call him
An Eastern tyrant, not an English king.

ABBOT.

Besides, my liege, these men are outlaws, thieves,
They break thy forest laws—nay, by the rood
They have done far worse—they plunder—yea, ev'n bishops,
Yea, ev'n archbishops—if thou side with these,
Beware, O King, the vengeance of the Church.

FRIAR TUCK (*brandishing his staff*).

I pray you, my liege, let me execute the vengeance of the Church upon them. I have a stout crabstick here, which longs to break itself across their backs.

ROBIN.

Keep silence, bully friar, before the King.

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FRIAR TUCK.

If a cat may look at a king, may not a friar speak to one?

KING RICHARD.

I have had a year of prison-silence, Robin,
And heed him not—the vengeance of the Church!
Thou shalt pronounce the blessing of the Church
On those two here, Robin and Marian.

MARIAN.

He is but hedge-priest, Sir King.

KING RICHARD.

And thou their Queen.
Our rebel Abbot then shall join your hands,
Or lose all hope of pardon from us—yet
Not now, not now—with after-dinner grace.
Nay, by the dragon of St. George, we shall
Do some injustice, if you hold us here
Longer from our own venison. Where is it?
I scent it in the green leaves of the wood.

MARIAN.

First, king, a boon!

KING RICHARD.

Why surely ye are pardon'd,
Even this brawler of harsh truths—I trust

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Half truths, good friar: ye shall with us to court.
Then, if ye cannot breathe but woodland air,
Thou Robin shalt be ranger of this forest,
And have thy fees, and break the law no more.

MARIAN.

It is not that, my lord.

KING RICHARD.

Then what, my lady?

ROBIN.

This is the gala-day of thy return.
I pray thee for the moment, strike the bonds
From these three men, and let them dine with us,
And lie with us among the flowers, and drink—
Ay, whether it be gall or honey to 'em—
The king's good health in ale and Malvoisie.

KING RICHARD.

By Mahound I could strive with Beelzebub!
So now which way to the dinner?

MARIAN.

Past the bank
Of foxglove, then to left by that one yew.
You see the darkness thro' the lighter leaf.
But look! who comes?

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Enter SAILOR.

SAILOR.

We heard Sir Richard Lea was here with Robin.
O good Sir Richard, I am like the man
In Holy Writ, who brought his talent back;
For tho' we touch'd at many pirate ports,
We ever fail'd to light upon thy son.
Here is thy gold again. I am sorry for it.

SIR RICHARD.

The gold—my son—my gold, my son, the land—
Here Abbot, Sheriff—no—no, Robin Hood.

ROBIN.

Sir Richard, let that wait till we have dined.
Are all our guests here?

KING RICHARD.

No—there's yet one other:
I will not dine without him. Come from out

Enter WALTER LEA.

That oak-tree! This young warrior broke his prison
And join'd my banner in the Holy Land,
And cleft the Moslem turban at my side.
My masters, welcome gallant Walter Lea.
Kiss him, Sir Richard—kiss him, my sweet Marian.

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MARIAN.

O Walter, Walter, is it thou indeed
Whose ransom was our ruin, whose return
Builds up our house again? I fear I dream.
Here—give me one sharp pinch upon the cheek
That I may feel thou art no phantom—yet
Thou art tann'd almost beyond my knowing, brother.

[*They embrace.*

WALTER LEA.

But thou art fair as ever, my sweet sister.

SIR RICHARD.

Art thou my son?

WALTER LEA.

I am, good father, I am.

SIR RICHARD.

I had despair'd of thee—that sent me crazed.
Thou art worth thy weight in all those marks of gold,
Yea, and the weight of the very land itself,
Down to the inmost centre.

ROBIN.

Walter Lea,

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Give me that hand which fought for Richard there.
Embrace me, Marian, and thou, good Kate,
[*To* KATE *entering.*
Kiss and congratulate me, my good Kate.
[*She kisses him.*

LITTLE JOHN.

Lo now! lo now!
I have seen thee clasp and kiss a man indeed,
For our brave Robin is a man indeed.
Then by thine own account thou shouldst be mine.

KATE.

Well then, who kisses first?

LITTLE JOHN.

Kiss both together.
[*They kiss each other.*

ROBIN.

Then all is well. In this full tide of love,
Wave heralds wave: thy match shall follow mine (*to* LITTLE JOHN).
Would there were more—a hundred lovers more
To celebrate this advent of our King!
Our forest games are ended, our free life,
And we must hence to the King's court. I trust

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We shall return to the wood. Meanwhile, farewell
Old friends, old patriarch oaks. A thousand winters
Will strip you bare as death, a thousand summers
Robe you life-green again. *You* seem, as it were,
Immortal, and we mortal. How few Junes
Will heat our pulses quicker! How few frosts
Will chill the hearts that beat for Robin Hood!

MARIAN.

And yet I think these oaks at dawn and even,
Or in the balmy breathings of the night,
Will whisper evermore of Robin Hood.
We leave but happy memories to the forest.
We dealt in the wild justice of the woods.
All those poor serfs whom we have served will bless
us,
All those pale mouths which we have fed will praise
us—
All widows we have holpen pray for us,
Our Lady's blessed shrines throughout the land
Be all the richer for us. You, good friar,
You Much, you Scarlet, you dear Little John,
Your names will cling like ivy to the wood.
And here perhaps a hundred years away
Some hunter in day-dreams or half asleep
Will hear our arrows whizzing overhead,
And catch the winding of a phantom horn.

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ROBIN.

And surely these old oaks will murmur thee
Marian along with Robin. I am most happy—
Art thou not mine?—and happy that our King
Is here again, never I trust to roam
So far again, but dwell among his own.
Strike up a stave, my masters, all is well.

SONG WHILE THEY DANCE A COUNTRY DANCE.

Now the king is home again, and nevermore to roam again,
Now the king is home again, the king will have his own again,
Home again, home again, and each will have his own again,
All the birds in merry Sherwood sing and sing him home again.

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BALIN AND BALAN.

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BALIN AND BALAN.[1]

PELLAM the King, who held and lost with Lot
In that first war, and had his realm restored
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late
To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur call'd
His treasurer, one of many years, and spake,
'Go thou with him and him and bring it to us,
Lest we should set one truer on his throne.
Man's word is God in man.'
His Baron said
'We go but harken: there be two strange knights
Who sit near Camelot at a fountain side,
A mile beneath the forest, challenging
And overthrowing every knight who comes.
Wilt thou I undertake them as we pass,
And send them to thee?'
Arthur laugh'd upon him.
'Old friend, too old to be so young, depart,
Delay not thou for ought, but let them sit,
Until they find a lustier than themselves.'

[1] An introduction to 'Merlin and Vivien.'

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So these departed. Early, one fair dawn,
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth return'd
On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself and went,
So coming to the fountain-side beheld
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,
Brethren, to right and left the spring, that down,
From underneath a plume of lady-fern,
Sang, and the sand danced at the bottom of it.
And on the right of Balin Balin's horse
Was fast beside an alder, on the left
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.
'Fair Sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore sit ye here?'
Balin and Balan answer'd 'For the sake
Of glory; we be mightier men than all
In Arthur's court; that also have we proved;
For whatsoever knight against us came
Or I or he have easily overthrown.'
'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's hall,
But rather proven in his Paynim wars
Than famous jousts; but see, or proven or not,
Whether me likewise ye can overthrow.'
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren down,
And lightly so return'd, and no man knew.
Then Balin rose, and Balan, and beside
The carolling water set themselves again,
And spake no word until the shadow turn'd;
When from the fringe of coppice round them burst

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A spangled pursuivant, and crying 'Sirs,
Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the King,'
They follow'd; whom when Arthur seeing ask'd
'Tell me your names; why sat ye by the well?'
Balin the stillness of a minute broke
Saying 'An unmelodious name to thee,
Balin, "the Savage"—that addition thine—
My brother and my better, this man here,
Balan. I smote upon the naked skull
A thrall of thine in open hall, my hand
Was gauntleted, half slew him; for I heard
He had spoken evil of me; thy just wrath
Sent me a three-years' exile from thine eyes.
I have not lived my life delightsomely:
For I that did that violence to thy thrall,
Had often wrought some fury on myself,
Saving for Balan: those three kingless years
Have past—were wormwood-bitter to me. King,
Methought that if we sat beside the well,
And hurl'd to ground what knight soever spurr'd
Against us, thou would'st take me gladlier back,
And make, as ten-times worthier to be thine
Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I have said.
Not so—not all. A man of thine to-day
Abash'd us both, and brake my boast. Thy will?'
Said Arthur 'Thou hast ever spoken truth;
Thy too fierce manhood would not let thee lie.

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Rise, my true knight. As children learn, be thou
Wiser for falling! walk with me, and move
To music with thine Order and the King.
Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren, stands
Vacant, but thou retake it, mine again!'
  Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd hall,
The Lost one Found was greeted as in Heaven
With joy that blazed itself in woodland wealth
Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of flowers,
Along the walls and down the board; they sat,
And cup clash'd cup; they drank and some one sang,
Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome, whereupon
Their common shout in chorus, mounting, made
Those banners of twelve battles overhead
Stir, as they stirr'd of old, when Arthur's host
Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day was won.
  Then Balan added to their Order lived
A wealthier life than heretofore with these
And Balin, till their embassage return'd.
  'Sir King' they brought report 'we hardly found,
So bush'd about it is with gloom, the hall
Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam, once
A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd
Horse against horse; but seeing that thy realm
Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ, the King
Took, as in rival heat, to holy things;
And finds himself descended from the Saint

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Arimathæan Joseph; him who first
Brought the great faith to Britain over seas;
He boasts his life as purer than thine own;
Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse abeat;
Hath push'd aside his faithful wife, nor lets
Or dame or damsel enter at his gates
Lest he should be polluted. This gray King
Show'd us a shrine wherein were wonders—yea—
Rich arks with priceless bones of martyrdom,
Thorns of the crown and shivers of the cross,
And therewithal (for thus he told us) brought
By holy Joseph hither, that same spear
Wherewith the Roman pierced the side of Christ.
He much amazed us; after, when we sought
The tribute, answer'd "I have quite foregone
All matters of this world: Garlon, mine heir,
Of him demand it," which this Garlon gave
With much ado, railing at thine and thee.
'But when he left, in those deep woods we found
A knight of thine spear-stricken from behind,
Dead, whom we buried; more than one of us
Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman there
Reported of some demon in the woods
Was once a man, who driven by evil tongues
From all his fellows, lived alone, and came
To learn black magic, and to hate his kind
With such a hate, that when he died, his soul

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Became a Fiend, which, as the man in life
Was wounded by blind tongues he saw not whence,
Strikes from behind. This woodman show'd the cave
From which he sallies, and wherein he dwelt.
We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no more.'
Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before me, see
He do not fall behind me: foully slain
And villainously! who will hunt for me
This demon of the woods?' Said Balan, 'I'!
So claim'd the quest and rode away, but first,
Embracing Balin, 'Good, my brother, hear!
Let not thy moods prevail, when I am gone
Who used to lay them! hold them outer fiends,
Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake them aside,
Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea, but to dream
That any of these would wrong thee, wrongs thyself.
Witness their flowery welcome. Bound are they
To speak no evil. Truly save for fears,
My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship
Would make me wholly blest: thou one of them,
Be one indeed: consider them, and all
Their bearing in their common bond of love,
No more of hatred than in Heaven itself,
No more of jealousy than in Paradise.'
So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin remain'd:
Who—for but three brief moons had glanced away

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From being knighted till he smote the thrall,
And faded from the presence into years
Of exile—now would strictlier set himself
To learn what Arthur meant by courtesy,
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore hover'd round
Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high sweet smile
In passing, and a transitory word
Make knight or churl or child or damsel seem
From being smiled at happier in themselves—
Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a height,
That glooms his valley, sighs to see the peak
Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the northern star;
For one from out his village lately climb'd
And brought report of azure lands and fair,
Far seen to left and right; and he himself
Hath hardly scaled with help a hundred feet
Up from the base: so Balin marvelling oft
How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd to move,
Groan'd, and at times would mutter, 'These be gifts,
Born with the blood, not learnable, divine,
Beyond *my* reach. Well had I foughten—well—
In those fierce wars, struck hard—and had I crown'd
With my slain self the heaps of whom I slew—
So—better!—But this worship of the Queen,
That honour too wherein she holds him—this,
This was the sunshine that hath given the man

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A growth, a name that branches o'er the rest,
And strength against all odds, and what the King
So prizes—overprizes—gentleness.
Her likewise would I worship an I might.
I never can be close with her, as he
That brought her hither. Shall I pray the King
To let me bear some token of his Queen
Whereon to gaze, remembering her—forget
My heats and violences? live afresh?
What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant it! nay
Being so stately-gentle, would she make
My darkness blackness? and with how sweet grace
She greeted my return! Bold will I be—
Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,
In lieu of this rough beast upon my shield,
Langued gules, and tooth'd with grinning savagery.'
And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought him, said
'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was bold, and ask'd
To bear her own crown-royal upon shield,
Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to the King,
Who answer'd 'Thou shalt put the crown to use.
The crown is but the shadow of the King,
And this a shadow's shadow, let him have it,
So this will help him of his violences!'
'No shadow' said Sir Balin 'O my Queen,
But light to me! no shadow, O my King,
But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

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So Balin bare the crown, and all the knights
Approved him, and the Queen, and all the world
Made music, and he felt his being move
In music with his Order, and the King.
The nightingale, full-toned in middle May,
Hath ever and anon a note so thin
It seems another voice in other groves;
Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,
The music in him seem'd to change, and grow
Faint and far-off.
And once he saw the thrall
His passion half had gauntleted to death,
That causer of his banishment and shame,
Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously:
His arm half rose to strike again, but fell:
The memory of that cognizance on shield
Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd:
'Too high this mount of Camelot for me:
These high-set courtesies are not for me.
Shall I not rather prove the worse for these?
Fierier and stormier from restraining, break
Into some madness ev'n before the Queen?'
Then, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,
And glancing on the window, when the gloom
Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame
That rages in the woodland far below,
So when his moods were darken'd, court and King

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And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall
Shadow'd an angry distance: yet he strove
To learn the graces of their Table, fought
Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.
Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat
Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.
A walk of roses ran from door to door;
A walk of lilies crost it to the bower:
And down that range of roses the great Queen
Came with slow steps, the morning on her face;
And all in shadow from the counter door
Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,
As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced
The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.
Follow'd the Queen; Sir Balin heard her 'Prince,
Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,
As pass without good morrow to thy Queen?'
To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,
'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'
'Yea so' she said 'but so to pass me by—
So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,
Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.
Let be: ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'
Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers
'Yea—for a dream. Last night methought I saw
That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand
In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,

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And all the light upon her silver face
Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.
Lo! these her emblems drew mine eyes—away:
For see, how perfect-pure! As light a flush
As hardly tints the blossom of the quince
Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood.'
'Sweeter to me' she said 'this garden rose
Deep-hued and many-folded! sweeter still
The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May.
Prince, we have ridd'n before among the flowers
In those fair days—not all as cool as these,
Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or sick?
Our noble King will send thee his own leech—
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at me?'
Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes; they dwelt
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not fall: her hue
Changed at his gaze: so turning side by side
They past, and Balin started from his bower.
'Queen? subject? but I see not what I see.
Damsel and lover? hear not what I hear.
My father hath begotten me in his wrath.
I suffer from the things before me, know,
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be knight;
A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom on gloom
Deepen'd: he sharply caught his lance and shield,
Nor stay'd to crave permission of the King,
But, mad for strange adventure, dash'd away.

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He took the selfsame track as Balan, saw
The fountain where they sat together, sigh'd
'Was I not better there with him?' and rode
The skyless woods, but under open blue
Came on the hoarhead woodman at a bough
Wearily hewing, 'Churl, thine axe!' he cried,
Descended, and disjointed it at a blow:
To whom the woodman utter'd wonderingly
'Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of these woods
If arm of flesh could lay him.' Balin cried
'Him, or the viler devil who plays his part,
To lay that devil would lay the Devil in me.'
'Nay' said the churl, 'our devil is a truth,
I saw the flash of him but yestereven.
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon too
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride unseen.
Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd him
'Old fabler, these be fancies of the churl,
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving him,
Now with slack rein and careless of himself,
Now with dug spur and raving at himself,
Now with droopt brow down the long glades he rode;
So mark'd not on his right a cavern-chasm
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far within,
The whole day died, but, dying, gleam'd on rocks
Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from the floor,
Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of night

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Whereout the Demon issued up from Hell.
He mark'd not this, but blind and deaf to all
Save that chain'd rage, which ever yelpt within,
Past eastward from the falling sun. At once
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud
And tremble, and then the shadow of a spear,
Shot from behind him, ran along the ground.
Sideways he started from the path, and saw,
With pointed lance as if to pierce, a shape,
A light of armour by him flash, and pass
And vanish in the woods; and follow'd this,
But all so blind in rage that unawares
He burst his lance against a forest bough,
Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and fled
Far, till the castle of a King, the hall
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly draped
With streaming grass, appear'd, low-built but strong;
The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,
The battlement overtopt with ivytods,
A home of bats, in every tower an owl.
Then spake the men of Pellam crying 'Lord,
Why wear ye this crown-royal upon shield?'
Said Balin 'For the fairest and the best
Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'
So stall'd his horse, and strode across the court,
But found the greetings both of knight and King
Faint in the low dark hall of banquet: leaves

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Laid their green faces flat against the panes,
Sprays grated, and the canker'd boughs without
Whined in the wood; for all was hush'd within,
Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise ask'd
'Why wear ye that crown-royal?' Balin said
'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I, and all,
As fairest, best and purest, granted me
To bear it!' Such a sound (for Arthur's knights
Were hated strangers in the hall) as makes
The white swan-mother, sitting, when she hears
A strange knee rustle thro' her secret reeds,
Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly smiled.
'Fairest I grant her: I have seen; but best,
Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall, and yet
So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are these
So far besotted that they fail to see
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret shame?
Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'
A goblet on the board by Balin, boss'd
With holy Joseph's legend, on his right
Stood, all of massiest bronze: one side had sea
And ship and sail and angels blowing on it:
And one was rough with wattling, and the walls
Of that low church he built at Glastonbury.
This Balin graspt, but while in act to hurl,
Thro' memory of that token on the shield
Relax'd his hold: 'I will be gentle' he thought

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'And passing gentle' caught his hand away,
Then fiercely to Sir Garlon 'Eyes have I
That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,
Shot from behind me, run along the ground;
Eyes too that long have watch'd how Lancelot draws
From homage to the best and purest, might,
Name, manhood, and a grace, but scantly thine,
Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst endure
To mouth so huge a foulness—to thy guest,
Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!
Let be! no more!'
But not the less by night
The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his rest,
Stung him in dreams. At length, and dim thro' leaves
Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated, and old boughs
Whined in the wood. He rose, descended, met
The scorner in the castle court, and fain,
For hate and loathing, would have past him by;
But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-wise;
'What, wear ye still that same crown-scandalous?'
His countenance blacken'd, and his forehead veins
Bloated, and branch'd; and tearing out of sheath
The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery 'Ha!
So thou be shadow, here I make thee ghost,'
Hard upon helm smote him, and the blade flew
Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the stones.
Then Garlon, reeling slowly backward, fell,

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And Balin by the banneret of his helm
Dragg'd him, and struck, but from the castle a cry
Sounded across the court, and—men-at-arms,
A score with pointed lances, making at him—
He dash'd the pummel at the foremost face,
Beneath a low door dipt, and made his feet
Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till he mark'd
The portal of King Pellam's chapel wide
And inward to the wall; he stept behind;
Thence in a moment heard them pass like wolves
Howling; but while he stared about the shrine,
In which he scarce could spy the Christ for Saints,
Beheld before a golden altar lie
The longest lance his eyes had ever seen,
Point-painted red; and seizing thereupon
Push'd thro' an open casement down, lean'd on it,
Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;
Then hand at ear, and harkening from what side
The blindfold rummage buried in the walls
Might echo, ran the counter path, and found
His charger, mounted on him and away.
An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to the left,
One overhead; and Pellam's feeble cry
'Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly things
With earthly uses'—made him quickly dive
Beneath the boughs, and race thro' many a mile
Of dense and open, till his goodly horse,

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Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
Stumbled headlong, and cast him face to ground.
  Half-wroth he had not ended, but all glad,
Knightlike, to find his charger yet unlamed,
Sir Balin drew the shield from off his neck,
Stared at the priceless cognizance, and thought
'I have shamed thee so that now thou shamest me,
Thee will I bear no more,' high on a branch
Hung it, and turn'd aside into the woods,
And there in gloom cast himself all along,
Moaning 'My violences, my violences!'
  But now the wholesome music of the wood
Was dumb'd by one from out the hall of Mark,
A damsel-errant, warbling, as she rode
The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her Squire.
  'The fire of Heaven has kill'd the barren cold,
And kindled all the plain and all the wold.
The new leaf ever pushes off the old.
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.
  'Old priest, who mumble worship in your quire—
Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's desire,
Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.
  'The fire of Heaven is on the dusty ways.
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.
The whole wood-world is one full peal of praise.
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell.

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'The fire of Heaven is lord of all things good,
And starve not thou this fire within thy blood,
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!
The fire of Heaven is not the flame of Hell!'
Then turning to her Squire 'This fire of Heaven,
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise again,
And beat the cross to earth, and break the King
And all his Table.'
Then they reach'd a glade,
Where under one long lane of cloudless air
Before another wood, the royal crown
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless elm
Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and her Squire;
Amazed were these; 'Lo there' she cried—'a crown—
Borne by some high lord-prince of Arthur's hall,
And there a horse! the rider? where is he?
See, yonder lies one dead within the wood.
Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping. I will speak.
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy sweet rest,
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble deeds.
But bounden art thou, if from Arthur's hall,
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from shame,
A lustful King, who sought to win my love
Thro' evil ways: the knight, with whom I rode,
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my squire
Hath in him small defence; but thou, Sir Prince,
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior King,

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Arthur the blameless, pure as any maid,
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.
I charge thee by that crown upon thy shield,
And by the great Queen's name, arise and hence.'
And Balin rose, 'Thither no more! nor Prince
Nor Knight am I, but one that hath defamed
The cognizance she gave me: here I dwell
Savage among the savage woods, here die—
Die: let the wolves' black maws ensepulchre
Their brother beast, whose anger was his lord.
O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted up,
And been thereby uplifted, should thro' me,
My violence, and my villainy, come to shame.'
Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and shrill, anon
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to her
'Is this thy courtesy—to mock me, ha?
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again she sigh'd
'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often laugh
When sick at heart, when rather we should weep.
I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy rest,
And now full loth am I to break thy dream,
But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy—and mark me well.
Dost thou remember at Caerleon once—
A year ago—nay, then I love thee not—
Ay, thou rememberest well—one summer dawn—

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By the great tower—Caerleon upon Usk—
Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair lord,
The flower of all their vestal knighthood, knelt
In amorous homage—knelt—what else?—O ay
Knelt, and drew down from out his night-black hair
And mumbled that white hand whose ring'd caress
Had wander'd from her own King's golden head,
And lost itself in darkness, till she cried—
I thought the great tower would crash down on both—
"Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me on the lips,
Thou art my King." This lad, whose lightest word
Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,
Saw them embrace: he reddens, cannot speak,
So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,
The deathless mother-maidenhood of Heaven
Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with me!
Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an thou would'st,
Do these more shame than these have done themselves.'
She lied with ease; but horror-stricken he,
Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,
Breathed in a dismal whisper 'It is truth.'
Sunnily she smiled 'And even in this lone wood
Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper this.
Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods have tongues,
As walls have ears: but thou shalt go with me,
And we will speak at first exceeding low.

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Meet is it the good King be not deceived.
See now, I set thee high on vantage ground,
From whence to watch the time, and eagle-like
Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the Queen.'
She ceased; his evil spirit upon him leapt,
He ground his teeth together, sprang with a yell,
Tore from the branch, and cast on earth, the shield,
Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal crown,
Stampt all into defacement, hurl'd it from him
Among the forest weeds, and cursed the tale,
The told-of, and the teller.
That weird yell,
Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or beast,
Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan lurking there
(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard and thought
'The scream of that Wood-devil I came to quell!'
Then nearing 'Lo! he hath slain some brother-knight,
And tramples on the goodly shield to show
His loathing of our Order and the Queen.
My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil or man
Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balin spake not word,
But snatch'd a sudden buckler from the Squire,
And vaulted on his horse, and so they crash'd
In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,
Reputed to be red with sinless blood,
Redden'd at once with sinful, for the point
Across the maiden shield of Balan prick'd

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The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's horse
Was wearied to the death, and, when they clash'd,
Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the man
Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd away.
Then to her Squire mutter'd the damsel 'Fools!
This fellow hath wrought some foulness with his Queen:
Else never had he borne her crown, nor raved
And thus foam'd over at a rival name:
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast broken shell,
Art yet half-yolk, not even come to down—
Who never sawest Caerleon upon Usk—
And yet hast often pleaded for my love—
See what I see, be thou where I have been,
Or else Sir Chick—dismount and loose their casques
I fain would know what manner of men they be.'
And when the Squire had loosed them, 'Goodly!—look!
They might have cropt the myriad flower of May,
And butt each other here, like brainless bulls,
Dead for one heifer!'
Then the gentle Squire,
'I hold them happy, so they died for love:
And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like your dog,
I too could die, as now I live, for thee.'
'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried. 'I better prize
The living dog than the dead lion: away!

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I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'
Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen oak,
And bounding forward 'Leave them to the wolves.'
  But when their foreheads felt the cooling air,
Balin first woke, and seeing that true face,
Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to where he lay,
And on his dying brother cast himself
Dying; and *he* lifted faint eyes; he felt
One near him; all at once they found the world,
Staring wild-wide; then with a childlike wail,
And drawing down the dim disastrous brow
That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it, moan'd and spake;
  'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had died
To save thy life, have brought thee to thy death.
Why had ye not the shield I knew? and why
Trampled ye thus on that which bare the Crown?'
  Then Balin told him brokenly, and in gasps,
All that had chanced, and Balan moan'd again.
  'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's hall:
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded not.
And one said "Eat in peace! a liar is he,
And hates thee for the tribute!" this good knight
Told me, that twice a wanton damsel came,
And sought for Garlon at the castle-gates,
Whom Pellam drove away with holy heat.
I well believe this damsel, and the one

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Who stood beside thee even now, the same.
"She dwells among the woods" he said "and meets
And dallies with him in the Mouth of Hell."
Foul are their lives; foul are their lips; they lied.
Pure as our own true Mother is our Queen.'
'O brother' answer'd Balin 'Woe is me!
My madness all thy life has been thy doom,
Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day; and now
The night has come. I scarce can see thee now.
Goodnight! for we shall never bid again
Goodmorrow—Dark my doom was here, and dark
It will be there. I see thee now no more.
I would not mine again should darken thine,
Goodnight, true brother.'
Balan answer'd low
'Goodnight, true brother here! goodmorrow there!
We two were born together, and we die
Together by one doom:' and while he spoke
Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and slept the sleep
With Balin, either lock'd in either's arm.

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THE
DEATH OF ŒNONE,
AKBAR'S DREAM,
AND OTHER POEMS

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JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER

To ——

THERE on the top of the down,
The wild heather round me and over me June's
high blue,
When I look'd at the bracken so bright and the
heather so brown,
I thought to myself I would offer this book to
you,
This, and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,

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With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-
blue heaven,
And a fancy as summer-new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of
the heather.

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TO THE MASTER OF BALLIOL

I

Dear Master in our classic town,
You, loved by all the younger gown
There at Balliol,
Lay your Plato for one minute down,

II

And read a Grecian tale re-told,
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,
Quintus Calaber
Somewhat lazily handled of old;

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III

And on this white midwinter day—
For have the far-off hymns of May,
All her melodies,
All her harmonies echo'd away?—

IV

To-day, before you turn again
To thoughts that lift the soul of men,
Hear my cataract's
Downward thunder in hollow and glen,

V

Till, led by dream and vague desire,
The woman, gliding toward the pyre,
Find her warrior
Stark and dark in his funeral fire.

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THE DEATH OF ŒNONE

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THE DEATH OF ŒNONE

ŒNONE sat within the cave from out
Whose ivy-matted mouth she used to gaze
Down at the Troad; but the goodly view
Was now one blank, and all the serpent vines
Which on the touch of heavenly feet had risen,
And gliding thro' the branches overbower'd
The naked Three, were wither'd long ago,
And thro' the sunless winter morning-mist
In silence wept upon the flowerless earth.
And while she stared at those dead cords that ran

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Dark thro' the mist, and linking tree to tree,
But once were gayer than a dawning sky
With many a pendent bell and fragrant star,
Her Past became her Present, and she saw
Him, climbing toward her with the golden fruit,
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,
Her husband in the flush of youth and dawn,
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God.

Anon from out the long ravine below,
She heard a wailing cry, that seem'd at first
Thin as the batlike shrillings of the Dead
When driven to Hades, but, in coming near,
Across the downward thunder of the brook
Sounded 'Œnone'; and on a sudden he,
Paris, no longer beauteous as a God,
Struck by a poison'd arrow in the fight,
Lame, crooked, reeling, livid, thro' the mist

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Rose, like the wraith of his dead self, and moan'd

'Œnone, *my* Œnone, while we dwelt

Together in this valley — happy then —

Too happy had I died within thine arms,

Before the feud of Gods had marr'd our peace,

And sunder'd each from each. I am dying now

Pierced by a poison'd dart. Save me. Thou knowest,

Taught by some God, whatever herb or balm

May clear the blood from poison, and thy fame

Is blown thro' all the Troad, and to thee

The shepherd brings his adder-bitten lamb,

The wounded warrior climbs from Troy to thee.

My life and death are in thy hand. The Gods

Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer

For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.

I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou forgive,

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Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.
Œnone, by thy love which once was mine,
Help, heal me. I am poison'd to the heart.'
'And I to mine' she said 'Adulterer,
Go back to thine adulteress and die!'
He groan'd, he turn'd, and in the mist at once
Became a shadow, sank and disappear'd,
But, ere the mountain rolls into the plain,
Fell headlong dead; and of the shepherds one
Their oldest, and the same who first had found
Paris, a naked babe, among the woods
Of Ida, following lighted on him there,
And shouted, and the shepherds heard and came.
One raised the Prince, one sleek'd the squalid hair,
One kiss'd his hand, another closed his eyes,
And then, remembering the gay playmate rear'd

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Among them, and forgetful of the man,
Whose crime had half unpeopled Ilion, these
All that day long labour'd, hewing the pines,
And built their shepherd-prince a funeral pile;
And, while the star of eve was drawing light
From the dead sun, kindled the pyre, and all
Stood round it, hush'd, or calling on his name.

But when the white fog vanish'd like a ghost
Before the day, and every topmost pine
Spired into bluest heaven, still in her cave,
Amazed, and ever seeming stared upon
By ghastlier than the Gorgon head, a face,—
His face deform'd by lurid blotch and blain—
There, like a creature frozen to the heart
Beyond all hope of warmth, Œnone sat
Not moving, till in front of that ravine
Which drowsed in gloom, self-darken'd from the west,

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The sunset blazed along the wall of Troy.
Then her head sank, she slept, and thro' her dream
A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,
Œnone! I can wrong thee now no more,
Œnone, my Œnone,' and the dream
Wail'd in her, when she woke beneath the stars.
What star could burn so low? not Ilion yet.
What light was there? She rose and slowly down,
By the long torrent's ever-deepen'd roar,
Paced, following, as in trance, the silent cry.
She waked a bird of prey that scream'd and past;
She roused a snake that hissing writhed away;
A panther sprang across her path, she heard
The shriek of some lost life among the pines,
But when she gain'd the broader vale, and saw
The ring of faces redden'd by the flames

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Enfolding that dark body which had lain
Of old in her embrace, paused — and then ask'd
Falteringly, 'Who lies on yonder pyre?'
But every man was mute for reverence.
Then moving quickly forward till the heat
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the pyre?'
Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,
'He, whom thou wouldst not heal!' and all at once
The morning light of happy marriage broke
Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,
And muffling up her comely head, and crying
'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile,
And mixt herself with *him* and past in fire.

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ST. TELEMACHUS

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ST. TELEMACHUS

HAD the fierce ashes of some fiery peak
Been hurl'd so high they ranged about the globe?
For day by day, thro' many a blood-red eve,
In that four-hundredth summer after Christ,
The wrathful sunset glared against a cross
Rear'd on the tumbled ruins of an old fane
No longer sacred to the Sun, and flamed
On one huge slope beyond, where in his cave
The man, whose pious hand had built the cross,
A man who never changed a word with men,
Fasted and pray'd, Telemachus the Saint.

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Eve after eve that haggard anchorite
Would haunt the desolated fane, and there
Gaze at the ruin, often mutter low
'Vicisti Galilæe'; louder again,
Spurning a shatter'd fragment of the God,
'Vicisti Galilæe!' but — when now
Bathed in that lurid crimson — ask'd 'Is earth
On fire to the West? or is the Demon-god
Wroth at his fall?' and heard an answer 'Wake
Thou deedless dreamer, lazying out a life
Of self-suppression, not of selfless love.'
And once a flight of shadowy fighters crost
The disk, and once, he thought, a shape with wings
Came sweeping by him, and pointed to the West,
And at his ear he heard a whisper 'Rome'
And in his heart he cried 'The call of God!'

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And call'd arose, and, slowly plunging down
Thro' that disastrous glory, set his face
By waste and field and town of alien tongue,
Following a hundred sunsets, and the sphere
Of westward-wheeling stars; and every dawn
Struck from him his own shadow on to Rome.

Foot-sore, way-worn, at length he touch'd his goal,
The Christian city. All her splendour fail'd
To lure those eyes that only yearn'd to see,
Fleeting betwixt her column'd palace-walls,
The shape with wings. Anon there past a crowd
With shameless laughter, Pagan oath, and jest,
Hard Romans brawling of their monstrous games;
He, all but deaf thro' age and weariness,
And muttering to himself 'The call of God'
And borne along by that full stream of men,
Like some old wreck on some indrawing sea,

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Gain'd their huge Colosseum. The caged beast
Yell'd, as he yell'd of yore for Christian blood.
Three slaves were trailing a dead lion away,
One, a dead man. He stumbled in, and sat
Blinded; but when the momentary gloom,
Made by the noonday blaze without, had left
His aged eyes, he raised them, and beheld
A blood-red awning waver overhead,
The dust send up a steam of human blood,
The gladiators moving toward their fight,
And eighty thousand Christian faces watch
Man murder man. A sudden strength from heaven,
As some great shock may wake a palsied limb,
Turn'd him again to boy, for up he sprang,
And glided lightly down the stairs, and o'er
The barrier that divided beast from man

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Slipt, and ran on, and flung himself between
The gladiatorial swords, and call'd 'Forbear
In the great name of Him who died for men,
Christ Jesus!' For one moment afterward
A silence follow'd as of death, and then
A hiss as from a wilderness of snakes,
Then one deep roar as of a breaking sea,
And then a shower of stones that stoned him
dead,
And then once more a silence as of death.
His dream became a deed that woke the world,
For while the frantic rabble in half-amaze
Stared at him dead, thro' all the nobler hearts
In that vast Oval ran a shudder of shame.
The Baths, the Forum gabbled of his death,
And preachers linger'd o'er his dying words,
Which would not die, but echo'd on to reach

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Honorius, till he heard them, and decreed
That Rome no more should wallow in this old lust
Of Paganism, and make her festal hour
Dark with the blood of man who murder'd man.

(For Honorius, who succeeded to the sovereignty over Europe, suppress the gladiatorial combats practised of old in Rome, on occasion of the following event. There was one Telemachus, embracing the ascetic mode of life, who setting out from the East and arriving at Rome for this very purpose, while that accursed spectacle was being performed, entered himself the circus, and descending into the arena, attempted to hold back those who wielded deadly weapons against each other. The spectators of the murderous fray, possest with the drunken glee of the demon who delights in such bloodshed, stoned to death the preacher of peace. The admirable Emperor learning this put a stop to that evil exhibition. — Theodoret's *Ecclesiastical History*.)

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AKBAR'S DREAM

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AKBAR'S DREAM

An Inscription by Abul Fazl for a Temple in Kashmir (Blochmann xxxii.)

O God in every temple I see people that see thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise thee.

Polytheism and Islám feel after thee.

Each religion says, 'Thou art one, without equal.'

If it be a mosque people murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love to Thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque.

But it is thou whom I search from temple to temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with either heresy or orthodoxy; for neither of them stands behind the screen of thy truth.

Heresy to the heretic, and religion to the orthodox,

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But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller.

AKBAR *and* ABUL FAZL *before the palace at Futehpur-Sikri at night.*

'LIGHT of the nations' ask'd his Chronicler
Of Akbar 'what has darken'd thee to-night?'
Then, after one quick glance upon the stars,
And turning slowly toward him, Akbar said
'The shadow of a dream — an idle one
It may be. Still I raised my heart to heaven,
I pray'd against the dream. To pray, to do —
To pray, to do according to the prayer,
Are, both, to worship Alla, but the prayers,
That have no successor in deed, are faint
And pale in Alla's eyes, fair mothers they
Dying in childbirth of dead sons. I vow'd
Whate'er my dreams, I still would do the right

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Thro' all the vast dominion which a sword,
That only conquers men to conquer peace,
Has won me. Alla be my guide!
But come,
My noble friend, my faithful counsellor,
Sit by my side. While thou art one with me,
I seem no longer like a lonely man
In the king's garden, gathering here and there
From each fair plant the blossom choicest-grown
To wreathe a crown not only for the king
But in due time for every Mussulmân,
Brahmin, and Buddhist, Christian, and Parsee,
Thro' all the warring world of Hindustan.
Well spake thy brother in his hymn to heaven
"Thy glory baffles wisdom. All the tracks
Of science making toward Thy Perfectness
Are blinding desert sand; we scarce can spell

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The Alif of Thine Alphabet of Love."

He knows Himself, men nor themselves nor Him,

For every splinter'd fraction of a sect

Will clamour "*I* am on the Perfect Way,

All else is to perdition."

Shall the rose

Cry to the lotus "No flower thou"? the palm

Call to the cypress "I alone am fair"?

The mango spurn the melon at his foot?

"Mine is the one fruit Alla made for man."

Look how the living pulse of Alla beats

Thro' all His world. If every single star

Should shriek its claim "I only am in heaven"

Why that were such sphere-music as the Greek

Had hardly dream'd of. There is light in all,

And light, with more or less of shade, in all

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Man-modes of worship; but our Ulama,
Who "sitting on green sofas contemplate
The torment of the damn'd" already, these
Are like wild brutes new-caged — the narrower
The cage, the more their fury. Me they front
With sullen brows. What wonder! I decreed
That even the dog was clean, that men may taste
Swine-flesh, drink wine; they know too that whene'er
In our free Hall, where each philosophy
And mood of faith may hold its own, they blurt
Their furious formalisms, I but hear
The clash of tides that meet in narrow seas, —
Not the Great Voice not the true Deep.
To drive
A people from their ancient fold of Faith,
And wall them up perforce in mine — unwise,

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Unkinglike;—and the morning of my reign
Was redden'd by that cloud of shame when I . . .
I hate the rancour of their castes and creeds,
I let men worship as they will, I reap
No revenue from the field of unbelief.
I cull from every faith and race the best
And bravest soul for counsellor and friend.
I loathe the very name of infidel.
I stagger at the Korân and the sword.
I shudder at the Christian and the stake;
Yet "Alla," says their sacred book, "is Love,"
And when the Goan Padre quoting Him,
Issa Ben Mariam, his own prophet, cried
"Love one another little ones" and "bless"
Whom? even "your persecutors"! there methought
The cloud was rifted by a purer gleam
Than glances from the sun of our Islâm.

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And thou rememberest what a fury shook
Those pillars of a moulder'd faith, when he,
That other, prophet of their fall, proclaimed
His Master as "the Sun of Righteousness,"
Yea, Alla here on earth, who caught and held
His people by the bridle-rein of Truth.

What art thou saying? "And was not Alla call'd
In old Irân the Sun of Love? and Love
The net of truth?"

A voice from old Irân!
Nay, but I know it — *his*, the hoary Sheik,
On whom the women shrieking "Atheist" flung
Filth from the roof, the mystic melodist
Who all but lost himself in Alla, him
Abû Saîd ——

— a sun but dimly seen
Here, till the mortal morning mists of earth

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Fade in the noon of heaven, when creed and race
Shall bear false witness, each of each, no more,
But find their limits by that larger light,
And overstep them, moving easily
Thro' after-ages in the love of Truth,
The truth of Love.

The sun, the sun! they rail
At me the Zoroastrian. Let the Sun,
Who heats our earth to yield us grain and fruit,
And laughs upon thy field as well as mine,
And warms the blood of Shiah and Sunnee,
Symbol the Eternal! Yea and may not kings
Express Him also by their warmth of love
For all they rule — by equal law for all?
By deeds a light to men?

But no such light
Glanced from our Presence on the face of one,

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Who breaking in upon us yestermorn,
With all the Hells a-glare in either eye,
Yell'd "hast *thou* brought us down a new Korân
From heaven? art *thou* the Prophet? canst *thou* work
Miracles?" and the wild horse, anger, plunged
To fling me, and fail'd. Miracles! no, not I
Nor he, nor any. I can but lift the torch
Of Reason in the dusky cave of Life,
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,
Adoring That who made, and makes, and is,
And is not, what I gaze on — all else Form,
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.
Ay but, my friend, thou knowest I hold that forms
Are needful: only let the hand that rules,
With politic care, with utter gentleness,

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Mould them for all his people.

And what are forms?

Fair garments, plain or rich, and fitting close

Or flying looselier, warm'd but by the heart

Within them, moved but by the living limb,

And cast aside, when old, for newer, — Forms!

The Spiritual in Nature's market-place —

The silent Alphabet-of-heaven-in-man

Made vocal — banners blazoning a Power

That is not seen and rules from far away —

A silken cord let down from Paradise,

When fine Philosophies would fail, to draw

The crowd from wallowing in the mire of earth,

And all the more, when these behold their Lord,

Who shaped the forms, obey them, and himself

Here on this bank in *some* way live the life

Beyond the bridge, and serve that Infinite

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Within us, as without, that All-in-all,
And over all, the never-changing One
And ever-changing Many, in praise of Whom
The Christian bell, the cry from off the mosque,
And vaguer voices of Polytheism
Make but one music, harmonising, "Pray."
  There westward — under yon slow-falling star,
The Christians own a Spiritual Head;
And following thy true counsel, by thine aid,
Myself am such in our Islâm, for no
Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse
My myriads into union under one;
To hunt the tiger of oppression out
From office; and to spread the Divine Faith
Like calming oil on all their stormy creeds,
And fill the hollows between wave and wave;
To nurse my children on the milk of Truth,

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And alchemise old hates into the gold
Of Love, and make it current; and beat back
The menacing poison of intolerant priests,
Those cobras ever setting up their hoods—
One Alla! one Kalifa!
Still — at times
A doubt, a fear, — and yester afternoon
I dream'd, — thou knowest how deep a well of love
My heart is for my son, Saleem, mine heir, —
And yet so wild and wayward that my dream —
He glares askance at thee as one of those
Who mix the wines of heresy in the cup
Of counsel — so — I pray thee ——
Well, I dream'd
That stone by stone I rear'd a sacred fane,
A temple, neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,

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But loftier, simpler, always open-door'd
To every breath from heaven, and Truth and Peace
And Love and Justice came and dwelt therein;
But while we stood rejoicing, I and thou,
I heard a mocking laugh "the new Korân!"
And on the sudden, and with a cry "Saleem"
Thou, thou — I saw thee fall before me, and then
Me too the black-wing'd Azrael overcame,
But Death had ears and eyes; I watch'd my son,
And those that follow'd, loosen, stone from stone,
All my fair work; and from the ruin arose
The shriek and curse of trampled millions, even
As in the time before; but while I groan'd,
From out the sunset pour'd an alien race,
Who fitted stone to stone again, and Truth,
Peace, Love and Justice came and dwelt therein,
Nor in the field without were seen or heard

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Fires of Sûttee, nor wail of baby-wife,
Or Indian widow; and in sleep I said
"All praise to Alla by whatever hands
My mission be accomplish'd!" but we hear
Music: our palace is awake, and morn
Has lifted the dark eyelash of the Night
From off the rosy cheek of waking Day.
Our hymn to the sun. They sing it. Let us go.'

Hymn

I

Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again
we see thee rise.
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human
hearts and eyes.

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Every morning here we greet it, bowing
lowly down before thee,
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine
ever-changing skies.

II

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from
clime to clime,
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in
their woodland rhyme.
Warble bird, and open flower, and, men,
below the dome of azure
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that
measures Time!

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NOTES TO AKBAR'S DREAM

The great Mogul Emperor Akbar was born October 14, 1542, and died 1605. At 13 he succeeded his father Humayun; at 18 he himself assumed the sole charge of government. He subdued and ruled over fifteen large provinces; his empire included all India north of the Vindhya Mountains—in the south of India he was not so successful. His tolerance of religions and his abhorrence of religious persecution put our Tudors to shame. He invented a new eclectic religion by which he hoped to unite all creeds, castes and peoples: and his legislation was remarkable for vigour, justice and humanity.

'*Thy glory baffles wisdom.*' The Emperor quotes from a hymn to the Deity by Faizi, brother of Abul Fazl, Akbar's chief friend and minister, who wrote the *Ain i Akbari* (Annals of Akbar). His influence on his age was immense. It may be that he and his brother Faizi led Akbar's mind away from

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Islám and the Prophet—this charge is brought against him by every Muhammadan writer; but Abul Fazl also led his sovereign to a true appreciation of his duties, and from the moment that he entered Court, the problem of successfully ruling over mixed races, which Islám in few other countries had to solve, was carefully considered, and the policy of toleration was the result (Blochmann xxix.)

Abul Fazl thus gives an account of himself 'The advice of my Father with difficulty kept me back from acts of folly; my mind had no rest and my heart felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia or to the hermits on Lebanon. I longed for interviews with the Llamás of Tibet or with the padres of Portugal, and I would gladly sit with the priests of the Parsis and the learned of the Zendavesta. I was sick of the learned of my own land.'

He became the intimate friend and adviser of Akbar, and helped him in his tolerant system of government. Professor Blochmann writes 'Impressed with a favourable idea of the value of his Hindu subjects, he (Akbar) had resolved when pensively sitting in the evenings on the solitary stone at Futehpur-Sikri to rule with an even hand all men in his dominions; but as the extreme views of the learned and the lawyers continually urged him to persecute instead of to heal, he instituted discussions, because, believing himself to be in error, he thought it his duty as ruler to inquire.' 'These discussions took place every Thursday night in the Ibadat-khana a building at Futehpur-Sikri, erected for the purpose' (Malleson).

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In these discussions Abul Fazl became a great power, and he induced the chief of the disputants to draw up a document defining the 'divine Faith' as it was called, and assigning to Akbar the rank of a Mujahid, or supreme khalifah, the vicegerent of the one true God.

Abul Fazl was finally murdered at the instigation of Akbar's son Salim, who in his Memoirs declares that it was Abul Fazl who had perverted his father's mind so that he denied the divine mission of Mahomet, and turned away his love from his son.

Faisi. When Akbar conquered the North-West Provinces of India, Faizi, then 20, began his life as a poet, and earned his living as a physician. He is reported to have been very generous and to have treated the poor for nothing. His fame reached Akbar's ears who commanded him to come to the camp at Chitor. Akbar was delighted with his varied knowledge and scholarship and made the poet teacher to his sons. Faizi at 33 was appointed Chief Poet (1588). He collected a fine library of 4300 MSS. and died at the age of 40 (1595) when Akbar incorporated his collection of rare books in the Imperial Library.

The Warring World of Hindostan. Akbar's rapid conquests and the good government of his fifteen provinces with their complete military, civil and political systems make him conspicuous among the great kings of history.

The Goan Padre. Abul Fazl relates that 'one night the

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Ibadat-khana was brightened by the presence of Padre Rodolpho, who for intelligence and wisdom was unrivalled among Christian doctors. Several carping and bigoted men attacked him and this afforded an opportunity for the display of the calm judgment and justice of the assembly. These men brought forward the old received assertions, and did not attempt to arrive at truth by reasoning. Their statements were torn to pieces, and they were nearly put to shame, when they began to attack the contradictions of the Gospel, but they could not prove their assertions. With perfect calmness, and earnest conviction of the truth he replied to their arguments.'

Abû Sa'îd. 'Love is the net of Truth, Love is the noose of God' is a quotation from the great Sufee poet Abû Sa'îd — born A.D. 968, died at the age of 83. He is a mystical poet, and some of his expressions have been compared to our George Herbert. Of Shaikh Abû Sa'îd it is recorded that he said, 'when my affairs had reacht a certain pitch I buried under the dust my books and opened a shop on my own account (*i.e.* began to teach with authority), and verily men represented me as that which I was not, until it came to this, that they went to the Qâdhî and testified against me of unbelieverhood; and women got upon the roofs and cast unclean things upon me.' (*Vide* reprint from article in *National Review*, March, 1891, by C. J. Pickering.)

Asis. I am not aware that there is any record of such

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intrusion upon the king's privacy, but the expressions in the text occur in a letter sent by Akbar's foster-brother Aziz, who refused to come to court when summoned and threw up his government, and 'after writing an insolent and reproachful letter to Akbar in which he asked him if he had received a book from heaven, or if he could work miracles like Mahomet that he presumed to introduce a new religion, warned him that he was on the way to eternal perdition, and concluded with a prayer to God to bring him back into the path of salvation' (Elphinstone).

'The Koran, the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David are called *books* by way of excellence, and their followers "People of the Book"' (Elphinstone).

Akbar according to Abdel Kadir had his son Murad instructed in the Gospel, and used to make him begin his lessons 'In the name of Christ' instead of in the usual way 'In the name of God.'

To drive
A people from their ancient fold of Truth, etc.

Malleson says 'This must have happened because Akbar states it, but of the forced conversions I have found no record. This must have taken place whilst he was still a minor, and whilst the chief authority was wielded by Bairam.'

'I reap no revenue from the field of unbelief.'

The Hindus are fond of pilgrimages, and Akbar removed

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a remunerative tax raised by his predecessors on pilgrimages. He also abolished the fezza or capitation tax on those who differed from the Mahomedan faith. He discouraged all *excessive* prayers, fasts and pilgrimages.

Sati. Akbar decreed that every widow who showed the least desire not to be burnt on her husband's funeral pyre, should be let go free and unharmed.

Baby-wife. He forbad marriage before the age of puberty.

Indian widow. Akbar ordained that remarriage was lawful.

Music. 'About a watch before daybreak,' says Abul Fazl, the musicians played to the king in the palace. 'His Majesty had such a knowledge of the science of music as trained musicians do not possess.'

'*The Divine Faith.*' The Divine Faith slowly passed away under the immediate successors of Akbar. An idea of what the Divine Faith was may be gathered from the inscription at the head of the poem. The document referred to, Abul Fazl says 'brought about excellent results (1) the Court became a gathering place of the sages and learned of all creeds; the good doctrines of all religious systems were recognized, and their defects were not allowed to obscure their good features; (2) perfect toleration or peace with all

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was established; and (3) the perverse and evil-minded were covered with shame on seeing the disinterested motives of His Majesty, and these stood in the pillory of disgrace.' Dated September 1579 — Ragab 987 (Blochmann xiv.)

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THE BANDIT'S DEATH

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TO SIR WALTER SCOTT[1]

O GREAT AND GALLANT SCOTT,
TRUE GENTLEMAN HEART, BLOOD AND BONE,
I WOULD IT HAD BEEN MY LOT
TO HAVE SEEN THEE, AND HEARD THEE, AND KNOWN.

[1] I have adopted Sir Walter Scott's version of the following story as given in his last journal (Death of Il Bizarro) — but I have taken the liberty of making some slight alterations.

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THE BANDIT'S DEATH

SIR, do you see this dagger? nay, why do you start aside?

I was not going to stab you, tho' I *am* the Bandit's bride.

You have set a price on his head: I may claim it without a lie.

What have I here in the cloth? I will show it you by-and-by.

Sir, I was once a wife. I had one brief summer of bliss

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But the Bandit had woo'd me in vain, and he stabb'd my Piero with this.

And he dragg'd me up there to his cave in the mountain, and there one day
He had left his dagger behind him. I found it. I hid it away.

For he reek'd with the blood of Piero; his kisses were red with his crime,
And I cried to the Saints to avenge me. They heard, they bided their time.

In a while I bore him a son, and he loved to dandle the child,
And that was a link between us; but I — to be reconciled? —

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No, by the Mother of God, tho' I think I hated
him less,
And — well, if I sinn'd last night, I will find the
Priest and confess.

Listen! we three were alone in the dell at the
close of the day.
I was lilting a song to the babe, and it laugh'd like
a dawn in May.

Then on a sudden we saw your soldiers crossing
the ridge,
And he caught my little one from me: we dipt
down under the bridge

By the great dead pine — you know it — and heard,
as we crouch'd below,

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The clatter of arms, and voices, and men passing
to and fro.

Black was the night when we crept away — not a
star in the sky —
Hush'd as the heart of the grave, till the little one
utter'd a cry.

I whisper'd 'give it to me,' but he would not
answer me — then
He gript it so hard by the throat that the boy
never cried again.

We return'd to his cave — the link was broken —
he sobb'd and he wept,
And cursed himself; then he yawn'd, for the wretch
could sleep, and he slept

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Ay, till dawn stole into the cave, and a ray red as blood
Glanced on the strangled face — I could make Sleep Death, if I would —

Glared on at the murder'd son, and the murderous father at rest, . . .
I drove the blade that had slain my husband thrice thro' his breast.

He was loved at least by his dog: it was chain'd, but its horrible yell
'She has kill'd him, has kill'd him, has kill'd him' rang out all down thro' the dell,

Till I felt I could end myself too with the dagger — so deafen'd and dazed —

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Take it, and save me from it! I fled. I was all
but crazed

With the grief that gnaw'd at my heart, and the
weight that dragg'd at my hand;
But thanks to the Blessed Saints that I came on
none of his band;

And the band will be scatter'd now their gallant
captain is dead,
For I with this dagger of his — do you doubt me?
Here is his head!

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THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

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THE CHURCH-WARDEN AND THE CURATE

This is written in the dialect which was current in my youth at Spilsby and in the country about it.

I

Eh? good daäy! good daäy! thaw it bean't not mooch of a daäy,
Nasty, casselty weather! an' mea haäfe down wi' my haäy!

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II

How be the farm gittin on? noäways. Gittin on i'deeäd!

Why, tonups was haäfe on 'em fingers an' toäs, an' the mare brokken-kneeäd,

An' pigs didn't sell at fall, an' wa lost wer Haldeny cow,

An' it beäts ma to knaw wot she died on, but wool's looking oop ony how.

III

An' soä they've maäde tha a parson, an' thou'll git along, niver fear,

Fur I beän chuch-warden mysen i' the parish fur fifteen year.

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Well — sin ther beä chuch-wardens, ther mun be
parsons an' all,
An' if t'ōne stick alongside t'uther the chuch weänt
happen a fall.

IV

Fur I wur a Baptis wonst, an' ageän the toithe an'
the raäte,
Till I fun that it warn't not the gaäinist waäy to
the narra Gaäte.
An' I can't abeär 'em, I can't, fur a lot on 'em
coom'd ta-year —
I wur down wi' the rheumatis then — to *my* pond
to wesh thessens theere —
Sa I sticks like the ivin as long as I lives to the
owd chuch now,

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Fur they wesh'd their sins i' *my* pond, an' I doubts
they poison'd the cow.

V

Ay, an' ya seed the Bishop. They says 'at he
coom'd fra nowt—
Burn i' traäde. Sa I warrants 'e niver said haäfe
wot 'e thowt,
But 'e creeäpt an' 'e crawl'd along, till 'e feeäld 'e
could howd 'is oän,
Then 'e married a greät Yerl's darter, an' sits o'
the Bishop's throän.

VI

Now I'll gie tha a bit o' my mind an' tha weant
be taäkin' offence,

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Fur thou be a big scholard now wi' a hoonderd haäcre o' sense —

But sich an obstropulous lad — naäy, naäy — fur I minds tha sa well,

Tha'd niver not hopple thy tongue, an' the tongue's sit afire o' Hell,

As I says to my missis to-daäy, when she hurl'd a plaäte at the cat

An' anoother ageän my noäse. Ya was niver sa bad as that.

VII

But I minds when i' Howlaby beck won daäy ya was ticklin' o' trout,

An' keeäper 'e seed ya an roon'd, an' 'e beal'd to ya 'Lad coom hout'

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An' ya stood oop maäkt i' the beck, an' ya tell'd
'im to knaw his awn plaäce
An' ya call'd 'im a clown, ya did, an' ya thraw'd
the fish i' 'is faäce,
An' 'e torn'd as red as a stag-tuckey's wattles, but
theer an' then
I coämb'd 'im down, fur I promised ya'd niver not
do it ageän.

VIII

An' I cotch'd tha wonst i' my garden, when thou
was a height-year-howd,
An' I fun thy pockets as full o' my pippins as iver
they'd 'owd,
An' thou was as peärky as owt, an' tha maäde me
as mad as mad,

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But I says to tha 'keeäp 'em, an' welcome' fur thou was the parson's lad.

IX

An' Parson 'e 'ears on it all, an' then taäkes kindly to me,
An' then I wur chose Chuch-warden an' coom'd to the top o' the tree,
Fur Quoloty's hall my friends, an' they maäkes ma a help to the poor,
When I gits the plaäte fuller o' Soondays nor ony chuch-warden afoor,
Fur if iver thy feyther 'ed riled me I kep' mysen meeäk as a lamb,
An' saw by the Graäce o' the Lord, Mr. Harry, I ham wot I ham.

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x

But Parson 'e *will* speäk out, saw, now 'e be sixty-seven,
He'll niver swap Owlby an' Scratby fur owt but the Kingdom o' Heaven;
An' thou'll be 'is Curate 'ere, but, if iver tha meäns to git 'igher,
Tha mun tackle the sins o' the Wo'ld, an' not the faults o' the Squire.
An' I reckons tha'll light of a livin' somewheers i' the Wowd or the Fen,
If tha cottons down to thy betters, an' keeäps thysen to thysen.
But niver not speäk plaäin out, if tha wants to git forrards a bit,
But creeäp along the hedge-bottoms, an' thou'll be a Bishop yit.

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XI

Naäy, but tha *mun* speäk hout to the Baptises here i' the town,

Fur moäst on 'em talks ageän tithe, an' I'd like tha to preäch 'em down,

Fur *they*'ve been a-preächin' *mea* down, they heve, an' I haätes 'em now,

Fur they leäved their nasty sins i' *my* pond, an' it poison'd the cow.

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'Casselty,' casualty, chance weather.

'Haăfe down wi' my haăy,' while my grass is only half-mown.

'Fingers an' toăs,' a disease in turnips.

'Fall,' autumn.

'If t'ōne stick alongside t'uther,' if the one hold by the other. One is pronounced like 'own.'

'Fun,' found.

'Gaăinist,' nearest.

'Ta-year,' this year.

'Ivin,' ivy.

'Obstropulous,' obstreperous—here the Curate makes a sign of deprecation.

'Hopple' or 'hobble,' to tie the legs of a skittish cow when she is being milked.

'Beal'd,' bellowed.

In such words as 'torned,' 'turned,' 'hurled,' the *r* is hardly audible.

'Stag-tuckey,' turkey-cock.

'Height-year-howd,' eight-year-old.

''Owd,' hold.

'Pearky,' pert.

'Wo'ld,' the world. Short *o*.

'Wowd,' wold.

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CHARITY

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CHARITY

I

WHAT am I doing, you say to me, 'wasting the
sweet summer hours'?
Haven't you eyes? I am dressing the grave of a
woman with flowers.

II

For a woman ruin'd the world, as God's own
scriptures tell,
And a man ruin'd mine, but a woman, God bless
her, kept me from Hell.

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III

Love me? O yes, no doubt — how long — till you
threw me aside!
Dresses and laces and jewels and never a ring for
the bride.

IV

All very well just now to be calling me darling and
sweet,
And after a while would it matter so much if I
came on the street?

V

You when I met you first — when *he* brought you!
— I turn'd away
And the hard blue eyes have it still, that stare of
a beast of prey.

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VI

You were his friend — you — you — when he promised to make me his bride,
And you knew that he meant to betray me — you knew — you knew that he lied.

VII

He married an heiress, an orphan with half a shire of estate, —
I sent him a desolate wail and a curse, when I learn'd my fate.

VIII

For I used to play with the knife, creep down to the river-shore,
Moan to myself 'one plunge — then quiet for evermore.'

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IX

Would the man have a touch of remorse when he heard what an end was mine?

Or brag to his fellow rakes of his conquest over their wine?

X

Money — my hire — *his* money — I sent him back what he gave, —

Will you move a little that way? your shadow falls on the grave.

XI

Two trains clash'd: then and there he was crush'd in a moment and died,

But the new-wedded wife was unharm'd, tho' sitting close at his side.

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XII

She found my letter upon him, my wail of reproach
and scorn;
I had cursed the woman he married, and him, and
the day I was born.

XIII

They put him aside for ever, and after a week — no
more —
A stranger as welcome as Satan — a widow came to
my door:

XIV

So I turn'd my face to the wall, I was mad, I was
raving-wild,
I was close on that hour of dishonour, the birth of
a baseborn child.

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XV

O you that can flatter your victims, and juggle, and lie and cajole,
Man, can you even guess at the love of a soul for a soul?

XVI

I had cursed her as woman and wife, and in wife and woman I found
The tenderest Christ-like creature that ever stept on the ground.

XVII

She watch'd me, she nursed me, she fed me, she sat day and night by my bed,
Till the joyless birthday came of a boy born happily dead.

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XVIII

And her name? what was it? I ask'd her. She said with a sudden glow

On her patient face 'My dear, I will tell you before I go.'

XIX

And I when I learnt it at last, I shriek'd, I sprang from my seat,

I wept, and I kiss'd her hands, I flung myself down at her feet,

XX

And we pray'd together for *him*, for *him* who had given her the name.

She has left me enough to live on. I need no wages of shame.

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XXI

She died of a fever caught when a nurse in a hospital ward.
She is high in the Heaven of Heavens, she is face to face with her Lord,

XXII

And He sees not her like anywhere in this pitiless world of ours!
I have told you my tale. Get you gone. I am dressing her grave with flowers.

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KAPIOLANI

Kapiolani was a great chieftainess who lived in the Sandwich Islands at the beginning of this century. She won the cause of Christianity by openly defying the priests of the terrible goddess Peele. In spite of their threats of vengeance she ascended the volcano Mauna-Loa, then clambered down over a bank of cinders 400 feet high to the great lake of fire (nine miles round) — Kilauea — the home and haunt of the goddess, and flung into the boiling lava the consecrated berries which it was sacrilege for a woman to handle.

I

WHEN from the terrors of Nature a people have
fashion'd and worship a Spirit of Evil,
Blest be the Voice of the Teacher who calls to
them
'Set yourselves free!'

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II

Noble the Saxon who hurl'd at his Idol a valorous
weapon in olden England!
Great and greater, and greatest of women, island
heroine, Kapiolani
Clomb the mountain, and flung the berries, and
dared the Goddess, and freed the people
Of Hawa-i-ee!

III

A people believing that Peelè the Goddess would
wallow in fiery riot and revel
On Kilauëä,
Dance in a fountain of flame with her devils, or
shake with her thunders and shatter her
island,
Rolling her anger

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Thro' blasted valley and flaring forest in blood-red
cataracts down to the sea!

IV

Long as the lava-light
Glares from the lava-lake
Dazing the starlight,
Long as the silvery vapour in daylight
Over the mountain
Floats, will the glory of Kapiolani be mingled with
either on Hawa-i-ee.

V

What said her Priesthood?
'Woe to this island if ever a woman should handle
or gather the berries of Peelè!
Accurséd were she!

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And woe to this island if ever a woman should
climb to the dwelling of Peelè the Goddess!
Accurséd were she!'

VI

One from the Sunrise
Dawn'd on His people, and slowly before him
Vanish'd shadow-like
Gods and Goddesses,
None but the terrible Peelè remaining as Kapiolani
ascended her mountain,
Baffled her priesthood,
Broke the Taboo,
Dipt to the crater,
Call'd on the Power adored by the Christian, and
crying 'I dare her, let Peelè avenge herself!'
Into the flame-billow dash'd the berries, and drove
the demon from Hawa-i-ee.

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THE DAWN

"You are but children."

Egyptian Priest to Solon.

I

RED of the Dawn!

Screams of a babe in the red-hot palms of a Moloch of Tyre,

Man with his brotherless dinner on man in the tropical wood,

Priests in the name of the Lord passing souls thro' fire to the fire,

Head-hunters and boats of Dahomey that float upon human blood!

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II

Red of the Dawn!
Godless fury of peoples, and Christless frolic of kings,
And the bolt of war dashing down upon cities and blazing farms,
For Babylon was a child new-born, and Rome was a babe in arms,
And London and Paris and all the rest are as yet but in leading-strings.

III

Dawn not Day,
While scandal is mouthing a bloodless name at *her* cannibal feast,

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And rake-ruin'd bodies and souls go down in a common wreck,
And the Press of a thousand cities is prized for it smells of the beast,
Or easily violates virgin Truth for a coin or a cheque.

IV

Dawn not Day!

Is it Shame, so few should have climb'd from the dens in the level below,
Men, with a heart and a soul, no slaves of a four-footed will?
But if twenty million of summers are stored in the sunlight still,
We are far from the noon of man, there is time for the race to grow.

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V

Red of the Dawn!

Is it turning a fainter red? so be it, but when shall we lay

The Ghost of the Brute that is walking and haunting us yet, and be free?

In a hundred, a thousand winters? Ah, what will *our* children be,

The men of a hundred thousand, a million summers away?

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THE MAKING OF MAN

WHERE is one that, born of woman, altogether can
escape
From the lower world within him, moods of tiger,
or of ape?
Man as yet is being made, and ere the crown-
ing Age of ages,
Shall not æon after æon pass and touch him into
shape?

All about him shadow still, but, while the races
flower and fade,

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Prophet-eyes may catch a glory slowly gaining on
the shade,
Till the peoples all are one, and all their voices
blend in choric
Hallelujah to the Maker 'It is finish'd. Man is
made.'

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THE DREAMER

On a midnight in midwinter when all but the winds were dead,
'The meek shall inherit the earth' was a Scripture that rang thro' his head,
Till he dream'd that a Voice of the Earth went wailingly past him and said:

'I am losing the light of my Youth
And the Vision that led me of old,
And I clash with an iron Truth,
When I make for an Age of gold,
And I would that my race were run,
For teeming with liars, and madmen, and knaves,

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And wearied of Autocrats, Anarchs, and
Slaves,
And darken'd with doubts of a Faith that
saves,
And crimson with battles, and hollow with
graves,
To the wail of my winds, and the moan of
my waves
I whirl, and I follow the Sun.'

Was it only the wind of the Night shrilling out
Desolation and wrong
Thro' a dream of the dark? Yet he thought that
he answer'd her wail with a song—

Moaning your losses, O Earth,
Heart-weary and overdone!

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But all's well that ends well,
  Whirl, and follow the Sun!

He is racing from heaven to heaven
  And less will be lost than won,
For all's well that ends well,
  Whirl, and follow the Sun!

The Reign of the Meek upon earth,
  O weary one, has it begun?
But all's well that ends well,
  Whirl, and follow the Sun!

For moans will have grown sphere-music
  Or ever your race be run!
And all's well that ends well,
  Whirl, and follow the Sun!

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MECHANOPHILUS

(In the time of the first railways)

Now first we stand and understand,
  And sunder false from true,
And handle boldly with the hand,
  And see and shape and do.

Dash back that ocean with a pier,
  Strow yonder mountain flat,
A railway there, a tunnel here,
  Mix me this Zone with that!

Bring me my horse — my horse? my wings
  That I may soar the sky,

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For Thought into the outward springs,
I find her with the eye.

O will she, moonlike, sway the main,
And bring or chase the storm,
Who was a shadow in the brain,
And is a living form?

Far as the Future vaults her skies,
From this my vantage ground
To those still-working energies
I spy nor term nor bound.

As we surpass our fathers' skill,
Our sons will shame our own;
A thousand things are hidden still
And not a hundred known.

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And had some prophet spoken true
Of all we shall achieve,
The wonders were so wildly new
That no man would believe.

Meanwhile, my brothers, work, and wield
The forces of to-day,
And plow the Present like a field,
And garner all you may!

You, what the cultured surface grows,
Dispense with careful hands:
Deep under deep for ever goes,
Heaven over heaven expands.

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RIFLEMEN FORM!

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,
Storm in the South that darkens the day!
Storm of battle and thunder of war!
Well if it do not roll our way.
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!
Ready, be ready against the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns,
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!
Are figs of thistles? or grapes of thorns?
How can a despot feel with the Free?

Digitized by Google

Form, Form, Riflemen Form!
Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!
Look to your butts, and take good aims!
Better a rotten borough or so
Than a rotten fleet and a city in flames!
Storm, Storm, Riflemen form!
Ready, be ready against the storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form!

Form, be ready to do or die!
Form in Freedom's name and the Queen's!
True we have got — *such* a faithful ally
That only the Devil can tell what he means.

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Form, Form, Riflemen Form!

Ready, be ready to meet the storm!

Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen form![1]

[1] I have been asked to republish this old poem, which was first published in 'The Times,' May 9, 1859, before the Volunteer movement began.

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THE TOURNEY

RALPH would fight in Edith's sight,
For Ralph was Edith's lover,
Ralph went down like a fire to the fight,
Struck to the left and struck to the right,
Roll'd them over and over.
'Gallant Sir Ralph,' said the king.

Casques were crack'd and hauberks hack'd,
Lances snapt in sunder,
Rang the stroke, and sprang the blood,
Knights were thwack'd and riven, and hew'd
Like broad oaks with thunder.
'O what an arm,' said the king.

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Edith bow'd her stately head,

Saw them lie confounded,

Edith Montfort bow'd her head,

Crown'd her knight's, and flush'd as red

As poppies when she crown'd it.

'Take her Sir Ralph,' said the king.

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THE BEE AND THE FLOWER

THE bee buzz'd up in the heat.

'I am faint for your honey, my sweet.'

The flower said 'Take it my dear,

For now is the spring of the year.

So come, come!'

'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd down from the heat.

And the bee buzz'd up in the cold

When the flower was wither'd and old.

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'Have you still any honey, my dear?'

She said 'It's the fall of the year,

But come, come!'

'Hum!'

And the bee buzz'd off in the cold.

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THE WANDERER

THE gleam of household sunshine ends,
And here no longer can I rest;
Farewell! — You will not speak, my friends,
Unfriendly of your parted guest.

O well for him that finds a friend,
Or makes a friend where'er he come,
And loves the world from end to end,
And wanders on from home to home!

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O happy he, and fit to live,
On whom a happy home has power
To make him trust his life, and give
His fealty to the halcyon hour!

I count you kind, I hold you true;
But what may follow who can tell?
Give me a hand — and you — and you —
And deem me grateful, and farewell!

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POETS AND CRITICS

This thing, that thing is the rage,
Helter-skelter runs the age;
Minds on this round earth of ours
Vary like the leaves and flowers,
  Fashion'd after certain laws;
Sing thou low or loud or sweet,
All at all points thou canst not meet,
  Some will pass and some will pause.

What is true at last will tell:
Few at first will place thee well;

Digitized by Google

Some too low would have thee shine,
Some too high — no fault of thine —
  Hold thine own, and work thy will!
Year will graze the heel of year,
But seldom comes the poet here,
  And the Critic's rarer still.

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A VOICE SPAKE OUT OF THE SKIES

A Voice spake out of the skies
To a just man and a wise —
'The world and all within it
Will only last a minute!'
And a beggar began to cry
'Food, food or I die'!
Is it worth his while to eat,
Or mine to give him meat,
If the world and all within it
Were nothing the next minute?

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DOUBT AND PRAYER

THO' Sin too oft, when smitten by Thy rod,
Rail at 'Blind Fate' with many a vain 'Alas!'
From sin thro' sorrow into Thee we pass
By that same path our true forefathers trod;
And let not Reason fail me, nor the sod
Draw from my death Thy living flower and grass,
Before I learn that Love, which is, and was
My Father, and my Brother, and my God!

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Steel me with patience! soften me with grief!
Let blow the trumpet strongly while I pray,
Till this embattled wall of unbelief
My prison, not my fortress, fall away!
Then, if thou willest, let my day be brief,
So Thou wilt strike Thy glory thro' the day.

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FAITH

I

Doubt no longer that the Highest is the wisest and the best,
Let not all that saddens Nature blight thy hope or break thy rest,
Quail not at the fiery mountain, at the shipwreck, or the rolling
Thunder, or the rending earthquake, or the famine, or the pest!

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II

Neither mourn if human creeds be lower than the
heart's desire!
Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam
of what is higher.
Wait till Death has flung them open, when the
man will make the Maker
Dark no more with human hatreds in the glare of
deathless fire!

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THE SILENT VOICES*

When the dumb Hour, clothed in black,
Brings the Dreams about my bed,
Call me not so often back,
Silent Voices of the dead,
Toward the lowland ways behind me,
And the sunlight that is gone!
Call me rather, silent voices,
Forward to the starry track
Glimmering up the heights beyond me
On, and always on!

* Copyright, 1892, by Macmillan & Co.

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GOD AND THE UNIVERSE

I

WILL my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your
deeps and heights?
Must my day be dark by reason, O ye Heavens,
of your boundless nights,
Rush of Suns, and roll of systems, and your fiery
clash of meteorites?

II

'Spirit, nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy
human state,

Digitized by Google

Fear not thou the hidden purpose of that Power
which alone is great,
Nor the myriad world, His shadow, nor the silent
Opener of the Gate.'

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THE DEATH

OF THE

DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE

To the Mourners.

THE bridal garland falls upon the bier,
The shadow of a crown, that o'er him hung,
Has vanish'd in the shadow cast by Death.
So princely, tender, truthful, reverent, pure —
Mourn! That a world-wide Empire mourns with you,

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That all the Thrones are clouded by your loss,
Were slender solace. Yet be comforted;
For if this earth be ruled by Perfect Love,
Then, after his brief range of blameless days,
The toll of funeral in an Angel ear
Sounds happier than the merriest marriage-bell.
The face of Death is toward the Sun of Life,
His shadow darkens earth: his truer name
Is 'Onward,' no discordance in the roll
And march of that Eternal Harmony
Whereto the worlds beat time, tho' faintly heard
Until the great Hereafter. Mourn in hope!

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CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

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